

BLUE BOOK

Magazine of Adventure for MEN, by MEN ★ MARCH ★ 25 Cents



THESE UNITED STATES... III—Indiana
Painted by HERBERT MORTON STOOPS

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Twelve short stories—including:

CRISIS IN HELL

by GILBERT WRIGHT

THE CHAMP'S LAST STAND

by JOEL REEVE

THE ROOM of the LAST CHANCE

by BERTRAM ATKEY



THESE UNITED STATES . . . III—INDIANA

The March on Vincennes

I WAS on that march with George Rogers Clark. We had a tough time getting through the flooded Illinois country, but we held up with Clark's help. He was on our necks every minute. He could curse and swear like a trooper, but could also spare an arm for anyone who fell; often he was up to his middle in water—and for very shame we all had to do our best. Those trails were something for men afoot and carrying arms; the memory makes me shake. Our aim was to surprise the British, who considered such country impassable—and rightly so. Without Clark driving us and helping us we could never have made the march; it was a nightmare thing. He was a real leader and not a warm-chair general.

I was cold as Irish hell. We were half frozen but we dared not stop to make fires except for cooking, lest the smoke betray us. The Indians were all against us; our object in taking the country was to stop their raids on the frontier. The hunger was terrible, for we could do no hunting.

There was a man who was called Big Jake. He had some dried meat and gave the General a strip. Clark grabbed it and cut it into hunks and passed them out. "That's all the rations," he said, "till we get into Vincennes." And most of us got nothing till then. It was too wet and cold to bother about eating, anyway; we were just plain downhearted and gave not a damn, so pulled in our belts, chewed leather and kept going.

SOME of us talked about getting good pay and finding some looting ahead. Clark went at us like a wild devil when he heard of it. "The Continental Congress needs all we can supply of faith and service," he barked. "It can give us nothing. Nor, by the living God, do I expect it to give us anything! I look farther. I see somewhere a country as yet unnamed, our country. I see it a land of freedom. I hope this country will have peace and prosperity, yet I am a practical man and know full well that no babe is born into this life without its al-

lotted portion of struggles and perils. I ask only that these perils be from God and not from evil men and traitors."

Wet moccasins and flooded trails are prime discouragers. Many of us wanted to slip o'le. We were backwoodsmen, not soldiers. There was no back of fresh meat afoot, and we might have broken up and got us a good living from the woods if we had not been held together by one man urging us on and shaming us with hellfire under his tongue. His words were true, as we all knew.

"Make it or go under!" I can hear him snapping out the words now. "Virginia needs you; the whole country fighting for liberty needs your help. If we fail, the Indians will come bursting over the settlements. If we fail, then those men far eastward now fighting the Redcoats will be struck in the back. For God's love go on and keep going, or we are all done for!"

Well, we kept on cold, wet, hungry and cursing like dogs. And we got there.

Readers' Comment*

*The Editors of BLUE BOOK are glad to receive letters of constructive criticism and suggestions; and for the ones we publish each month we will pay the writers ten dollars each.

Letters should not be longer than two hundred words; no letters can be returned and all will become property of McCall Corporation. They should be addressed: Editor of Letters Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York 17, New York.

Blue Cover but Red Face

IN "Guarding Patton's Flank," by Lt. Comdr. Richard Kelly in our January issue, the capture of a large German force in France was erroneously credited to our 80th Division instead of to our 83rd Division. Both these divisions have such distinguished reputations that nothing Lt. Comdr. Kelly or BLUE BOOK might say could add or detract from them. It is important to keep the record straight, however; and to Clarence Hendricks of Greenville, Pa., Tom Albaugh of Preston, Idaho, and the other men of the 83rd, we offer sincere apologies.

A Good Story Gets Around

AS Education Officer for the Tokyo Detachment of the Tokyo Kanagawa Military Government District, I seek constantly to impress upon Japanese students the concept of a world of peace based upon tolerance and understanding. No better expression of the common qualities of mankind have I found than is so movingly portrayed in Fred Schiller's beautiful story, "Ten Men and a Prayer." I was privileged to read the story the day before Christmas; so its real significance was intensified for me. Tomorrow I shall refer to the story in a speech which I shall deliver to a group of Japanese working women searching for ways to work for a Japan of peace.

As a New Englander far from home (New Hampshire), Andrew A. Caffrey's, "High, Wide and Hazardous" furnished me with many a chuckle.

Paul T. Dupell.

1st Lt., Air Corps

HELP YOUR RED CROSS



BLUE BOOK

March, 1947

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Except for articles and stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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The Room of the Last

IT was toward the end of his tour in India in search of local color, that the celebrated novelist who wrote under the pen-name of Hobart Honey had with great presence of mind flung his heavy camera at a mad—or maddish—dog which was aiming itself at an elderly absent-minded Lama from Tibet. The camera had reached the back of the dog's brains-container corner-first, and the misguided animal forgot the Lama forthwith. It disappeared, semi-concussed, round a corner and up an alley, complaining bitterly of the tourists.

The Lama, who like many other people had a marked distaste for being bitten by mad dogs, was passionately grateful to Mr. Honey for his timely intervention. He proved to be one of these high-powered Lamas, so full of wisdom that he frequently strained himself holding it in. After a brief conversation, the novelist returned to his hotel. That evening he received from the Lama a large bottle, full of pills, and a long letter. It was not until he had read the letter twice that Honey realized that these were very special pills. They were not designed to correct any of those physical embarrassments which occasionally afflict the ordinary person and for which the ordinary pill of commerce is supposed to be the correct ticket. On the contrary, these were super-pills which could be relied upon to launch who-soever swallowed one, on a super-experience. The man who took one would, immediately after taking it, find himself temporarily relieved from the trials and troubles of his present life or incarnation and returned for a time to some incarnation which he had lived before.

The Lama, a naïve old gentleman in many ways in spite of his terrific wisdom, had quite sincerely believed that he was giving Mr. Honey an extremely valuable present when he sent him the pills. On learning during their conversation that Honey was a writer he had expressed great astonishment that one so young and presumably inexperienced should attempt to earn a living with his pen and had decided that his gratitude could best be expressed by a gift which would furnish a writer with a few experiences that would widen his knowledge of the people of the world, past and present.

Hence the big bottle of pills.

In the long letter which he sent with the gift the Lama said, among a good many other things:

"When thou art in the mood for education, swallow one of the pills and await peacefully that which will at once take place. Thou wilt return to live again for a space of time some one or another of the uncountable lives which thou hast lived before the one which thou art now living. Be not alarmed if thou shouldst awaken in the form of a wild swine of ancient days, a lizard of the rocks or an humble ape bescratching itself on the banyan bough—for thy days whereas will be but brief, and ere thou hast time to accommodate thyself to thy new surroundings, lo! the power of the pill shall have waned, and thou shalt find thyself again upon thy couch in these present days.

"Fear not thou wilt ever be what thou hast not once been. If, in past ages, thou hast been a great king, a noble lawgiver, a mighty prophet, a glorious general, maybe the power of the pill will reinstate thee for a while in all thine ancient splendor; or if thou hast been before of a somewhat inferior quality, as it might even be no more than a jackass browsing upon a hillside or a rat journeying darkly through the runs and tunnels of his dismal abode, so mayst thou be again. But what-so-be-it befallth thee, it is certain that thy knowledge of past things and places shall be enormously, and thou shalt become exceeding wise—so that thy fellow scribes, scratching busily like fowls behind the granary, shall behold thy works with amazement."

So much for the Lama's letter. There was a good deal more of it but the foregoing extract gives the idea of it well enough.

When, next day, Mr. Honey called on the Lama to thank him, he found that the old gentleman, leaving no address, had wandered on to mix with the four hundred million or so of India's denizens, thus rendering himself pretty well anonymous.

OUR OLD FRIEND HOBART HONEY
VENTURES A NEW GAMBLE IN TRANS-
MIGRATION. THIS TIME HE GOES
BACK TO AN INCARNATION AS A
GLADIATOR IN THE ROMAN ARENA
—AND FINDS IT A RUGGED LIFE.

by BERTRAM
ATKEY

On his return home, Hobart Honey proved himself not quite so youthfully inexperienced as the Lama appeared to believe him, for he promptly emptied the pills into another container and sold the bottle of wonderfully worked old Chinese glass, with amethyst-and-green dragons all over it, to a museum for twenty thousand dollars.

For a time he let the pills lie.

Then, one wet evening when he was feeling too bored to amuse himself and too lazy to go out and pay somebody else to amuse him, he decided to try one of the Lama's pills. He did so and got the shock of his lifetime. The power of the pill returned him to an incarnation that he had lived in ancient Babylon as a practising chiropodist in the reign of the great Queen Semiramis. He had the misfortune to offend the Queen and she had completed that incarnation for him by the simple process of having him thrown into the pit of the tigers—large and bad-tempered ones, specially kept at the back of the palace for the purpose of squaring the Queen's accounts with those who offended her.

But the Lama had told the truth about the pills, and Mr. Honey, though fired with such great suddenness out of his Babylonian incarnation, had wakened to find himself safely back in his present-day incarnation—but with his memory of Babylon and its people greatly refreshed.

SINCE then he had taken many pills with widely varying results. He had been in many interesting situations in all periods of human history; he had met a number of curious people, some of whom he had killed and some of whom had killed him. He had been hanged, shot, starved, impaled, drowned, tortured, beheaded, outlawed, banished, bastinadoed and knouted; he had been rich, poor and neither; he had loved ladies of all ages and epochs; he had been to innumerable places—but few which he would have cared to revisit. On the whole he had found life tough in most of his past reincarnations; and he had not yet revisited one in which he proved to be anybody of much importance.

But he could not shake off the notion that at some period he must in the nature of things have been one of the Great Ones, and he was determined to persevere with the pills until he discovered what it was like to be what the Lama had called a "great

Chance



*"Come then, striped devil!"
shouted Honibus, casting
the net perfectly.*

king or a glorious general," or someone of that caliber. It was with that hope in his mind that he settled down in his big easy-chair on the night before his fortieth birthday, took off a couple of glasses of port in quick succession, and trickled a pill out onto his palm. For a few minutes he stared at it, fascinated.

"Not everybody would take a chance with you," he said to it, "if they knew as much about their own past as I know about mine!"

He knew that it might land him for a time back in some incarnation in which he had figured without much success as a prehistoric man in difficulty with a giant cave bear, or a deer in front of a pack of wolves, or a bison of the Middle Ages about to be hamstringed by an Apache fond of bison-meat, or any one of a thousand things that had once lived. Against that, he *might* wake to find himself Julius Caesar, Jonah, Hamlet, or Noah on a cruise in his Ark; he might be Alexander the Great, Hercules or T'Chaka the Zulu king. He might even be Antony dallying with the lovely Cleopatra on the Nile, King Charles the Second calling on pretty Nell Gwyn, Henry the Eighth dancing with Anne Bolcyn, Lancelot coquetting with Queen Guinevere, or Louis the Four-

teenth of France taking Madame de Montespan to lunch at his private pavilion in the park. Anybody, in fact—anywhere—anywhen!

He gave himself another glass of port and sent the pill down in front of the wine, leaning comfortably back in his chair.

As usual, he got quick action. It seemed to him he lost consciousness almost instantly—as indeed he did. It was as if he had dropped asleep, instantly to begin dreaming.

But this was no dream—the noise in which he seemed to wake was too vivid, the taste of wine on his tongue too sharp for any dream. As was the friendly blow, heavy enough to fell a bullock, he received on his shoulder just as his consciousness registered the fact that he was no longer Hobart Honey, the novelist of these days, but instead was Honibus the Gladiator—in the days of Nero, Emperor of Rome.

He had just entered the canteen back of the wild beasts' den in which a party of his fellow gladiators were drinking after their day's training, and it seemed that he was, as the saying goes, the center of attention, the cynosure of all eyes. And not very welcome attention at that, for they were laughing at him.

"Ho, Honibus, he will assuredly turn thee inside out!" roared a huge red-haired burly giant from Liguria. "Drink, man, drink with me whilst thou canst still hold wine!"

Honibus, a magnificently built Roman, turned on the Ligurian.

"Art turned simple in thy understanding, Superbus?" he said. "Who is this who will turn me inside out? By all the gods, the man is not yet born of woman who will achieve that!"

He glared round at the company.

A huge black-browed mongrel who looked like a cross between a giant Turk and an outsize, double-chested gorilla with a broken nose, emitted a roaring laugh.

"Nay, *retarius*, there thou missest thy guess," he bawled, laughing again. He was half-drunk. "Give me wine, somebody, ere I wreck this desert-dry canteen!"

A thick-eared Greek boxer who was screwing up some nuts and bolts or similar whatnots on his iron and leather boxing-gloves*, put down his

*They appear to have liked a lot of good, honest metal—preferably iron—in the professionals' boxing-gloves of those days. See Ovid in "The Art of Love."—Bertram.

spanner and stared curiously at Honibuss. He opened a gap-toothed mouth to speak, but whatever he said was drowned in a sudden inferno from the other side of the wall: The vicious, strangled snarl of tigers, mingled with the loud, chesty roar of lions, and the gruntings of what could only be gigantic bears. There was such a shocking note of bestial rage and ferocity in this sudden clamor that even the deliberately brutalized company of gladiators, well used to the sounds of the beasts, listened in silence for a second.

"What aileth them?" said a bright-looking male creature. Immensely heavy, this was Ultra, one of the Phytos. He looked like an artificially enlarged, double blacksmith, except for his shaven head which was but half head-size and as round as a casually round grapefruit. No brains, evidently. He had run to muscle instead of gray matter—which probably was why he was a Pluto. His duty in the arena was not to light but, armed with a sledgehammer and in company with a few others like him, to finish off those unfortunate gladiators who were too seriously injured to be of any further value as gladiators.

There entered a fearfully scarred, oldish, and leathery-looking man who smelled like several leopards. This was an assistant *bestiarius* or, as we should say, menagerie attendant.

"What hath enraged thy great cats, that they burst so suddenly into harmony, Hotiron?" demanded Ultra with

a staggering imprecation. "Can't hear myself drink!"

"Nay, they are excited. The black Carthaginian war-elephant Moloch hath just arrived and the beasts have scented him. By the gods, they may well howl, for if they ever have to face him in the arena they will—Hal He announceth himself! Hearken! Never have I heard such a trumpeting—never have I seen so towering, so vast, an elephant. Nor one so vicious or of so bloodshoten a temper!"

HE was right. It was indeed an awesome din with which the fabulously costly, newly imported fighting elephant promptly answered the clamor of the man-eaters.

"Hah, my braves, that's a lad will provide sport for the populace at the Games on Sunday!" chuckled Hotiron, reaching for his wine. "I guarantee it! And if ye believe me not ask Honibuss on Monday—if he's here to tell you!"

Honibuss turned on the old *bestiarius* with a blood-curdling oath.

"Ask me, thou palsied old sot! Why ask me? What have I to do with your lousy war-elephant? I—a *retarius*—a fighter with net and trident! Bahl! Better ask the captives and slaves in the dungeons—or the rhinoceri in their stables!"

Hotiron gaped at the net-fighter. "Thou dost not know? Hast thou not seen the Amended Orders? Nay, I see how it is—thou hast been on pass this afternoon."

All the gladiators laughed—hoarse, growling laughter, for Honibuss was far from popular. He was the idol of the Lady Delyria, a lovely patrician of great wealth, influence and nerve, who was—or had been—a kind of favorite of the Emperor Nero—and her bribes to the Master of the Gladiators for the pleasure of Honibuss' company, as it were to tea, were so huge and frequent that the number of passes granted him were the cause of a dangerous amount of jealousy among his comrades—if one can call them comrades.

"Hey, Honibuss, we were trying to tell thee, were we not?" shouted the Greek boxer. "Whilst thou wert coquetting with thy sweet Delyria—and we were sweating blood in the gymnasium—the Orders for the Sunday games were amended, by special command of Nero himself. And in the Amended Orders *thou* art billed to fight Moloch the new war-elephant! Habet, Honibuss!"

Honibuss felt a sudden icy chill, then threw it off as the manifest absurdity of the thing occurred to him.

He glared at the Greek.

"And, perhaps, thou Peloponnesian polecat, thou wilt enlighten my ignorance if I ask just precisely how the hell a *retarius* is to fight an elephant?"

Old Hotiron chuckled.

"That is what Nero wisheth to know, I suppose!" he said. "And to see—on Sunday next!"

"But it is without sense. No man could carry a net that would entangle a damned great elephant—much less throw it!" snarled Honibuss.

"True, O Honibuss," sneered the Greek. "The Emperor probably overlooked a little thing like that."

Honibuss was doomed and knew it. But he kept his head. He realized

Illustrated
by Charles
Chickering



"Feel it well, Arcas-
sia. There is more
gold than thou hast
ever seen!"

that if he was going to do anything about it he would have to get cracking, for he had much to do and very little time in which to do it.

He leaped to his feet and flung himself out of the canteen, followed by roars of savage laughter from the crowd of desperadoes that passed as his comrades. He did not blame them; the canteen of the gladiators was not a good place to seek sympathy. Their business was death and nobody knew better than they themselves that they were as certain of ultimate extinction in the arena as was Honibus. It was only a question of time—and not much of that. . . .

Delaying only long enough to take something that flashed greenly from his kit-bag, Honibus made for the quarters of Gargoyla, the Master of the Gladiators—a hard-boiled old scoundrel who, by industry, graft and complete callousness had worked his way up to his present altitude from a humble position of assistant executioner somewhere in the provinces.

"Hah!" he said as Honibus strode in. "It was in my mind that I should be seeing thee ere many hours had sped! What wastest thou, *retiarus*?"

"A midnight pass to the City," growled Honibus.

Gargoyla's laugh was like the rattling of a sheet of galvanized iron loose on a roof in a gale.

"Certainly—with greatest pleasure, Honibus. Any little thing like that—any time," he said satirically. Then his tone changed.

"Why, thou pinheaded orang, thou art billed to fight Moloch the war-elephant in the arena on Sunday! Dost think I would let thee out of my sight ere then? It is the order of Caesar himself! Dost think I hunger to be cast into the crocodile pool? A pass to the City? *What* city? Some city in remote Asia, maybe! I know thee too well to let thee loose, thou great, gangling oaf! I have never trusted thee, even before thou wert booked! And as for trusting thee now, I will do that only when I am consumed of a desire to see thee vanishing in a cloud of dust over the far horizon—and not before!"

Honibus scowled.

"Gargoyla," he said desperately, "I am a man of few words. I need half an hour—an hour; I go no farther than the villa of the Lady Delyria. That I must do. She is a favorite of Nero. How long, thinkest thou, will it take her to persuade him to cancel this mad amendment of the order for the Games? Look!"

He produced suddenly an emerald the size of a walnut, a priceless gaud, a gift from Delyria.

*Gladiators who specialized in the use of short sword and buckler. Very competent; not parties to annoy.—*Bertram*.

"Quick, Gargoyla, make up thy mind. This jewel for an hour's pass! Real? Is it *real*, askest thou? Only the best and biggest in the world! Didst ever know a Roman lady stint her well-beloved of a jewel or two?"

Gargoyla's hand came out and closed over the stone like a grapple.

"An hour, then—no more, mark ye! I shall have thee shadowed. Four of the Thracians* shall dog thy steps. Try to evade them, *retiarus*, and they will bring thee back to me in four separate portions or divisions, and I will send thee to Nero on a large dish! Go then—what art waiting for?"

ONE of the loveliest patrician ladies of Rome and one of the most unscrupulous, the Lady Delyria (widow of the richest man in Rome, who had died of a surfeit of unidentified cold steel a year or two before) was asleep when Honibus was conducted to her by her confidential slave-maid. But she woke with astonishing rapidity as soon as the gist of Honibus' story penetrated.

She leaped to him, speaking earnestly. Unlike many of the Roman ladies of the period, she was genuinely fond of her gladiator. That is to say, she had not yet grown tired of him.

"It is murder, of course, my little *retiarus*! But a trifle to Nero. He liketh thee not, little man!"

He was about twice her size, but it was her playful affectionation to use these affectionate diminutives.

Honibus glowered.

"He liketh me not! What doth he know of me, a common gladiator, that he should like me or like me not?"

She looked at him with a curious little secret smile.

"It may be that he knoweth more of thee than thou mayest suspect. Come, sit close by me, my littling, that I may whisper. The very walls of Rome have ears in such times as these!"

"It is enough," he muttered.
"Listen to the design I have planned."

She pulled him down to sit beside her and drew his close-cropped head to her lips.

"Nero is jealous of thee!" she breathed, almost soundlessly.

Honibus looked incredulous.

"Jealous of me! Nero! Nay but that is not possible! An Emperor—Caesar!"

"Emperor for how long, Honi, think you?" came the subtle whisper. "Said I not that these are strange times? There are whispests everywhere of revolt! There are swords that no longer lie quiet. They are awake and moving—like bright, deadly snakes that no longer sleep! But the time is not yet. . . . Sh!"

She listened for a moment, then went on:

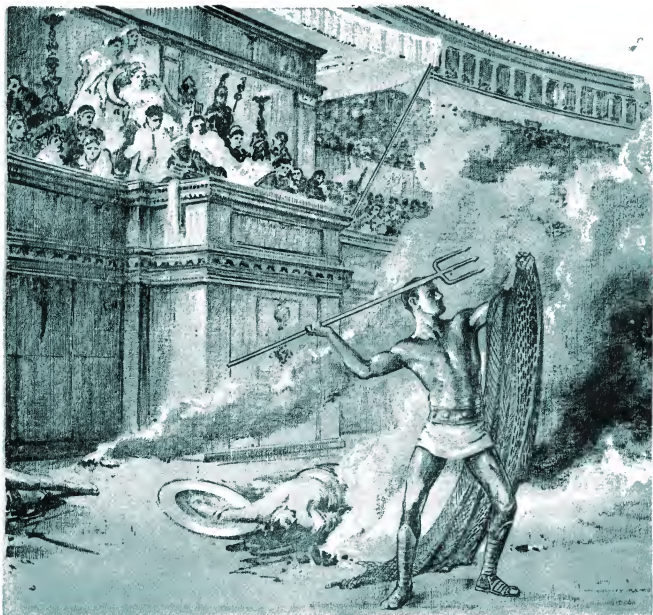
"If Nero had heard even that, he would have me beheaded! . . . Listen to me, my little anaconda: We have been betrayed, thou and I. It was that Lacedemonian girl, Icene, who was my maid but a little time ago. I have had her whipped and whipped again. She shall end beneath the talons of the beasts in the arena, for she was criminal—a traitress and spy, an eavesdropper, a listener in the dark, a seller of secrets!"

Her eyes were blazing with sudden sheer ferocity. Even Honibus was a little startled.

But the wildest glare died away as quickly as it flared up. She was pressing close to him, sensuously rubbing her beautiful head against his muscular arm, rather like one of the cats of which she had, for a flashing second, reminded him.

"Thou knowest, Honi, that I am—or was—a favorite of Nero—if to be one of the many he has cut down as a fool cuts down flowers with a cane is to be a favorite! And it is in my mind that





the Orders for the Games were thus amended, in respect to *thee*, because of a comparison I made between thee and Nero. It was no more than a passing comment upon his qualities as a man, not an emperor—and thine as a man, not a gladiator. Talking with the Lady Poppelia, my half sister, I said that whereas, as a man, Nero was as it were a fat ignoble crayfish which had been out of the water too long, while thou wert a superb lion—and more, beloved octopus, and more! Poppelia agreed. But we were overheard by Icene and sold to those who conveyed it to Nero!"

"Gods! What said he?" ejaculated Honibus, enfolding her not unlike the beloved octopus she claimed him to be.

"He said, regarding thee, that he would be interested to see what such a superb lion would do in the arena against the Carthaginian war-elephant, if it arrived in time for the Games. Regarding me, he gave a secret order that I be poisoned after the Games and the rumor be spread

that I had killed myself because thou hadst been trampled and torn by the elephant, and my wealth confiscated—one tenth thereof, and her freedom, to be bestowed upon that evil, treacherous slave-snake, Icene—with Poppelia to be secretly killed later!"

"So thou too art under sentence? By the gods, it is a venomous crayfish! Yet, what can we do?"

Delyria laughed like a tigress with her temper well under control. She had her failings but lack of courage was not one of them.

"Thou shalt see! I am not the richest woman in Rome for nothing! I have sent for one who can aid us—for smooth gold and smoother revenge!"

She clapped her hands and a slave-woman entered.

"Hath the learned Arcassia arrived? Then admit him to me. And send more wine and more wine and yet more wine to the Thraces without."

Suddenly the nerve of the great elephant went, and there

The slave disappeared and an aged, white-bearded, quiet man with one blank eye and a ghastly pitted face, entered. This was Arcassia, the so-called sorcerer. He had been one of those oil-soaked human torches with which Nero had once illuminated one of his garden parties, and had escaped only by chance, hideously burned.

"Hast achieved aught, Arcassia?" demanded the lady. "The gold of which I spoke awaits thee—if thou hast planned well."

She pointed carelessly to a silk sack by her couch.

"Feel it, Arcassia, feel it well. There is more gold than thou hast ever seen! More than thou wilt ever need for all thy designs against—him who blinded thee by fire."

The lean fire-scarred hands of the sorcerer ran over the sack like those of a musician over his instrument.

"Yes, it is enough," he muttered. "Listen! Oh, Delyria—oh, *retarius*,



sounded a note of distress and panic in his wild trumpeting.

this is the design I have planned. Listen with all thine ears! Thou wilt be last called into the arena at the Sunday games, Honibus. The war-elephant will be maddened by the odor of blood and the reek of the savage beasts and his own pain. For that is what renders him forever raging, unmanageable, and therefore useless to the Carthaginians—the pain: He hath one of his great tusks decayed at the base and his sufferings are unimaginable. That is why he is so terrible—he hates everything and knows not why. Nero meaneth him to destroy thee! He will be awaiting thee, furious and raging. What shall a man accomplish with a net and trident, against a mad elephant? But listen! At the instant thou enterest the arena there will arise such a cloud of black smoke that all things will be obscured. Nay, there is no magic; I have made the smoke! It will arise from the burning of certain things contained within little pots

which will be thrown from all quarters into the arena by men I have paid and posted to their positions. Doubt not that they will succeed. They are chosen carefully and more gold awaits them when they have succeeded. They will raise a cry of ‘*Revolt!*’ But ignore it; it is a matter which concerns thee not.

“The elephant will panic in the smoke. Avoid him, for he will be maddened with fear and pain and anger. Avoid him, I say—I cannot help thee in that. Look well to thy net, lest it be rotten—having been secretly made useless. Cling to thy trident; examine it well before thou enterest the ring. If it hath been tampered with have ready another, a good one, wherewith to exchange thy spoiled one. Avoiding—if thou canst—the elephant (and thou art a dead man if thou failest), race for the wall of the arena exactly under the Emperor’s seat. Carved there on the wall

is a narrow decorated panel and at the height of thy head is a carved bunch of grapes that is a part of the decoration. Twist this bunch of grapes to the right (for it is the lever or handle of a secret door) and the marble decoration will swing inward like an opening door. Pass through and close the door behind thee. Though the arena be packed, none shall see thee, for be well assured that the arena shall be black and blind with smoke. Cling to thy trident—there may be tigers, or the lions may be loosed, or the great pythons, according to Nero’s mood.

“Thou wilt find thyself within a little secret chamber. Abide there silently and await those who will come to thee in the night when the arena is deserted—men of mine whom thou canst trust. Nay, look not astounded! The secret room hath been there since the arena was built. Only the Emperor and a few others know it. All Rome knows that under the royal reserve there is at the foot of a flight of marble steps a retiring-

room; but those who know of the secret cell behind the retiring-room are less than ten. It was so designed and it hath two doors—one to the arena, one to a long passageway or tunnel to the outside of the arena. It is a device for the safety of the Caesars in an emergency—a revolt—such an occasion! Now, repeat the things I have told thee."

He listened attentively as Honibus repeated very accurately and carefully his instructions.

"Yes, yes. . . . Again!"

Again Honibus went through it.

"Good! . . . Beware the elephant—and the wild beasts! Be steady—Be cool and watchful and thou art saved! Be careless in but one particular, and the gods themselves could not save thee—for Nero is set upon thy destruction in this fashion."

Lady Delvria's fingers closed on Honibus' arm as the four Thracians strode in—fearful-looking toughs, half-drunk, but not so drunk that they had forgotten their orders.

"Time, Honibus!" growled their leader.

The alleged sorcerer looked at them.

"Yea—time, Honibus!" he said.

The Lady Delvria saw how it was with the escort, knew that they were as inflexible, as implacable, as the certain death which awaited them if they failed to return with the net-and-trident lighter.

"Yes, it is time," she whispered. "Go with them. I will await thy return, little octopus!"

BY the time that the huge black war-elephant strode into the arena, the place was vile, reeking of blood, of the stench of the glutted beasts of prey, of the sweat of thousands of spectators wrought up to a pitch of savage excitement. Though the Plutos had dragged away the dead, though fresh sand had been scattered, there was no cleanliness there. And the odor of burned flesh still hung heavy and horrible on the still windless stifling air, to bear witness to the savage zeal of the Mercuries—men armed with long metal rods, the ends kept red-hot in braziers, with which they tested the unconscious, the dead, or those who feigned to be either. Some of the great beasts had returned to their dens; some remained glutted and lazy, sprawling on the sand. A huge python rasped his enormous body ceaselessly round the foot of the walls, frightened and enraged by the clamor into a sinewy menace ready to attack anything that moved or that it encountered. Many people—criminals, prisoners of war, slaves, Christians—had died terribly that afternoon. Here and there the great beasts grunted and snarled still over bones they were too satiated to touch.



"A retiarius in combat with an elephant!" Nero sneered.

Most of the gladiators were dead or maimed: Honibus had seen them die. The redheaded sword-fighter Superbus was dead, killed by the gorilla-like Turkish giant, who in turn was himself killed a few seconds later. The Greek boxer had been smashed like a shellfish by a vast Scythian boxer.

Nero, well aware of the threat of ultimate revolt against his evil reign, had spared nothing to give the blood-thirsty populace what it wanted, and now the moment had arrived when the Games would culminate in the incident which interested him most—the spectacular murder of Honibus.

He leaned back comfortably.

"We have wondered often how a retiarius would comport himself in combat with an elephant! Crayfish!" he sneered to a woman reclining at his side in the center of the brilliantly appareled crowd hived round about him under the great awning. She laughed a little uncertainly, not understanding the allusion to a crayfish.

But the Lady Delvria, sitting close by, understood. Her eyes gleamed and she paled a little in spite of her confidence in the one-eyed Arcassia. She had given him a fortune and she knew he would add to that all his brain could conjure to perfect his hatred of the royal animal that was Caesar.

The great elephant went raging past the royal enclosure, trumpeting insanely; he saw the python and made for it. An immense maneless lion swerved away from the vast beast, roaring ferociously as he went, but too heavy and sluggish to dispute the path of the monster. The great snake reared high with gaping jaws, formidable even though not venomous, striking desperately with its blunt hammer-head, writhing about the tusks and trunk of the elephant. But it was no match and the mighty pillar-like legs of the huge fighting beast began to pound the thick writhing coils to shapelessness.

It was at this moment that Honibus entered the arena, the great iron-barred gates crashing remorselessly shut behind him.

He looked coolly about him—taking in every foot of the airless, sun-flooded, murder-sodden killing-ring. Though it seemed to the bloodthirsty crowd that he was utterly doomed; it was evident that he meant to throw away no slender chance. He carried an old net and an older trident. But he could rely upon these which he had secreted, for all his better and later nets had been tampered with.

He moved stealthily forward a yard or two, flashing a glance at Nero's box. He could see the panel which was his target.

Then from his right, a lean, flat-flanked tigress wheeled snarling and with amazing speed launched herself at him. Unlike many of the beasts, she had not eaten in the arena, for she was a killer first; later, in the gloom, she would glut herself at leisure—but not while she could kill. It was as if she knew that Honibus was her last chance to satisfy the strange and fearful lust that possessed her.

But this time it was no unarmed Christian upon whom she sprang; instead, this was a cool, highly trained, tremendously strong, and skillful and deadly dangerous expert at his strange art, lighting for his life and determined to sell it dearly.

"Come then, striped devil!" shouted Honibus, balancing himself for his cast. The tigress leaped. But she did not reach the man, for the net, perfectly cast, met her in mid-air and she dropped, flailing madly at the entangling meshes, imprisoning herself as a fly imprisons itself in the web of a spider. Crazed with fury, she rolled and Honibus was upon her in a flash. The blade-points of the trident glittered in the sun as they descended.

In a matter of seconds the striped killer was dead, killed with almost contemptuous ease by a master of the trident-fighter's craft.

ATTRACTED from his own slaughtering by the hideous uproar of the tigress, the great war-elephant stared across and pivoted, his trunk swung high over his head.

Nero leaned forward with a chuckle and two women—the ladies Delvria and Poppelia—sitting not far from the Emperor, gasped, though long since inured to the sights of the arena.

"Gods! He hath now to cross the whole arena!" gasped Delvria. "Now, sorcerer! Now, Arcassia—ere it is too late!"

Even as she breathed her appeal, an object like a small earthenware pot flew from the lower tier of the amphitheater to fall a few feet from the elephant; it broke silently as it fell,

and emitted a dense stream of thick black smoke at the base of which flickered here and there tiny thorns of needlelike jets of flame.

Honibus tore his trident from the dead tigress, watching the startled elephant. Then another smoke-pot fell—and another—and another. The pots were lying flat now, for Arcassia had spent a fortune in bribes to skilled and desperate men.

The huge crowd began to scream furiously for the death of those who dared to interfere with the Games—but the flying pots were too many and with tremendous speed the smoke welled up in huge black billows of spreading flame-shot gloom.

Nero glared, shouting orders, unheard in the rising tumult, then fell back on his seat, biting his nails.

SUDDENLY the nerve of the great elephant went; he recoiled from a pot that sent into his eyes a huge black gout of smoke, so dense that he was blotted out of the view of many watching him. Only his mighty trunk waving high above the rank rising cloud of black could be seen as he backed away. Black fountains of the heavy greasy smoke ascended now from many points of the arena, and there sounded a note of distress and panic in the vast, wild trumpeting of the enormous killer.

There were those who saw that the *retarius* was crossing the arena, slowly, quietly, watchfully—weaving his way through the deepening gloom spreading from the smoke pillars. Then with a scream the elephant turned, racing clear of the smoke to the far end of the arena. Those who saw anything at all, saw his trunk describe a vicious scything swing at Honibus as the big beast thundered past him. But the gladiator evaded it by inches.

The din was fearful and to the shouting of the people was added the fearful uproar of the wild beasts as they came to the open mouths of their dens, smelled the smoke and recoiled far back to the blood-smeared recesses of their grated lairs.

Then a new cry, coming from many places, pierced the clamor:

"*Revolt! Revolt! Revolt!*"

A stampede began as people pressed out of the tiers of seats.

Nero leaped to his feet.

"What shout they?" he demanded, glaring about him.

"*Revolt!*"

It cut like a blade through the blaring of the crowd and of the beasts.

"They shout '*Revolt!*' O Caesar!" said a painted favorite, fearfully.

Nero struck at him with a feeble fat hand, cursed him, and hurried to the marble stairs by the royal reserve.

And now Honibus had reached the decorated panel below the royal awn-

ing. The fear-maddened elephant went charging past him through the smoky gloom, so close that it seemed to the trident fighter as if he watched the black side of a great ship race past him within six inches.

He coughed in the strangling smoke-reck, his eyes streaming as he groped for the carved bunch of grapes of which Arcassia had told him. He could not find it. Here the smoke was at its thickest and most blinding.

He glanced behind him, but could see nothing but the black billowing fog of smoke. The elephant was trumpeting wildly on the other side of the arena, and it seemed now as if all Rome were howling in desperate, blood-freezing unison: "*Revolt! Revolt! Revolt!*"

Then his groping hand closed on the marble grape-bunch, and he wrenched it round. Well-oiled, it moved easily. He pushed and followed the narrow, inward-opening door, swiftly swinging it shut behind him.

He found himself in silence, in sweet air, and alone. It was a small room, carpeted with a Persian rug, and containing no more than a couch, a table, and a jar of wine. There were swords in a corner, and on the table were certain strange-shaped bottles that were full of colorless, heavy liquid.

"Poisons!" said Honibus. "Yea, the One-Eyed One spoke truth indeed. This is the Room of the Last Chancel For the gladiator as for the Emperor!"

He laughed softly in the quiet room, and reached for the wine-jar, then drew back his hand, his eyes on the array of poisons.

"Nay! Nay! Wine is good but not such wine as this may be!"

He looked at his stained trident.

"Well for me I kept this old, well-proven friend to my hand this day! Never lived there *retarius* who made a swifter, cleaner kill! Well for me—that striped she-devil might have spoiled a perfect stratagem!"

Yet even he did not guess how perfect—until suddenly an unsuspected door facing him yawned open to admit a fat pasty painted man with curled hair, who darted in, looking over his shoulder, muttering. Even as the door swung shut behind this man, Honibus caught a far cry that seemed to follow him—

"*Revolt!*"

"*Alone—and safe!*" said the newcomer triumphantly, and turned to discover himself facing Honibus. Nero reeled under the shock of it, supporting himself against the table.

"Nero!" cried Honibus.

"Yea!" gasped the Emperor. "Bow down, *retarius!*"

But Honibus smiled.

"The days of the bowing-down have run out, O Nero! Like sand within the hour-glass they have fallen to an end. 'Bow down,' sayest thou to me? But I say 'Bow down' to thee, O Nero!"

And he drove his trident through the fat neck of the tyrant with such force that it was near to a decapitation.

"A good stroke!" he said complacently. "Never lived the gladiator who made a better!"

Coolly, he watched the man die; then, as coolly, sat down on the couch to wait—as he had been instructed to wait. He felt no uneasiness, for he was unshakably convinced that a plan such as this of Arcassia and the Lady Delyria must inevitably run true to the moment of its perfect culmination.

He pushed the body of the dead despot out of the way with his foot, made himself comfortable on the couch, and went to sleep.

He was awakened presently by the entry of several hard-featured, heavily armed men—strangers to him. They ignored him except for a few quick words from their leader.

"A good stroke, Honibus! But withhold thyself from this matter, for it concerneth thee not. It is a matter of high politics!"

"The gods forbid that I mix myself with high politics!" said Honibus emphatically. He closed his mouth, turned away, and kept it closed. When he looked round the strange men were gone, as was also the body of Nero.

He waited silently.

It seemed to him that he sat for a long, long time in that grim little room of the Last Chance—so long that it must have been the following dawn when he saw the door open and a narrow vertical crack of light widen down the side.

A woman's voice—surely Delyria's—spoke so softly that he only caught a word:

"*Honi—*"

IT was, however, the voice of Mr. Honey's housekeeper in his Twentieth Century flat. She was coming in to take away his coffee-tray—quietly, very quietly, in case he was asleep.

"Is everything all right, Mr. Honey?" she asked doubtfully. "I—I thought I heard you say something about being 'delirious.'"

"No, no—not 'delirious'—not now!" replied Mr. Honey oddly.

He was right. Everything was in order—under control again. Once more the power of the Lama's pill had run out—as usual at an inconvenient moment of that incarnation. That was all. . . He had, in fact, "had it."

Another of Mr. Honey's astonishing adventures in transmigration will be a feature of our forthcoming April issue.

Indian Sign

It's tough to think your best friend has turned horsethief. But the sign did point that way.

by GLENN R.
VERNAM

I WAS just topping out on one of those sharp ridges that run back into the main body of the Thunderbolt Hills, when my eyes picked up a movement in the cañon below. I instinctively jerked my head down off the skyline. With so many horses disappearing off the Splitrock Valley range that spring, we boys had acquired a great fondness for a first look see at any unidentified rider. I carefully backed my horse down below the rim as I slid out of the saddle.

That was back when Wyoming was still pretty raw. Horse-stealing was a popular diversion in certain circles those days. And the hard-eyed jaspers who rode in the shadow of a hemp noose were usually about as tough as their reputations. Bumping into one of them too carelessly was often bad medicine, for their trigger fingers were sometimes as jumpy as their nerves.

That's why I was feeling so proud of myself as I crawled up behind a big boulder. I was around seventeen then, and pretty cocky about my scouting ability. Of course, I realized the fellow might be any drifting rider, but that didn't dampen my satisfaction. I had won the right to do the first recognizing.

I edged a little rock up against the boulder and focused my eyes through the crevice between. The man was still coming, moving through brush thickets and rocky upthrust with studied care. Every little while he would twist around in the saddle to scan both sides of the cañon. I adjusted my peephole to better advantage and screwed myself tighter against the ground. A man didn't ordinarily go coyoting through the brush like that unless he was on the dodge.



Then imagine my let-down when he rode out into a little opening ten minutes later, to disclose himself as one of our own punchers!

In fact, he was my best friend. Full-blood Indian, though he was, Tom Little-bear was about the nearest thing to a brother that I ever had. And Tom was really an exceptional person who would have stood out in any company. Tall and clean-cut and built like a rawhide rope, he could match any white man for looks or action, and he was as agreeable too. He had quit the Reservation and drifted down into the Splitrock country the summer before, hunting a chance to work his way into the white man's way of life. Proud as he was of his native heritage, he saw more to the future than smoky wickiups and Government rations. Ben Duane gave him his chance, there at Broken Arrow, in much the same spirit that he had salvaged me out of a gyp horse-trader's camp the year before. Ben was always a sucker for under-dogs. Tom and I were about of an age, and being the two kid strays of the outfit, we naturally herded together. It even got so the other boys claimed that half the time they couldn't tell which of us was the Indian.

When I discovered it was Tom coming up the cañon, I shook out a grin and hunched one shoulder to push myself upright. Then, midway of the move, I settled back; and something

pulled the corners of my mouth down tight, for I had suddenly remembered he was supposed to be hunting strays over on Wagonwheel Creek. Ben gave him his orders that morning, while I was saddling up to ride the bog-holes between the river and Thunderbolt Hills. Riding Wagonwheel was a big day's work; yet here he was, a little past noon, a dozen miles in the opposite direction. It didn't add up!

Nothing added up. I was hunting for a lot of answers as the Indian passed on around a bend in the cañon, still moving as if he had business that wouldn't stand observation. Why all the secrecy? Where was he heading for? Why had he ridden off his job to sneak into the tangle of broken ridges and blind cañons that everything but snakes, coyotes and lost souls avoided?

All this naturally shifted my thoughts around to the current epidemic of horse-stealing. But Tom wouldn't have any hand in rustling. I told myself angrily. It couldn't be! He was square from the ground up! Yet common sense bluntly informed me that true Indian nature often had a way of stepping out from behind its mask of civilized amiability. At that time a good many Indians still had trouble appreciating all the white man's elevating ideas.

I was still fighting my head over the problem when I got back to the ranch that afternoon. Then, before I finished unsaddling, another complica-



*Illustrated by
Raymond Thayer*

There could be no mistaking the clean-cut figure of Tom Little-bear.

tion came fogging into the yard in the form of Dave Norcliff and Shorty Wiggins, of the Triangle Seven. One look at their faces and sweaty horses was enough to remind me that troubles never came singly. I hurriedly kicked the corral gate shut on my horse, and toted my ears across to where the two had stopped beside Ben at the blacksmith-shop. Ben looked up from shrinking a tire on the chuck-wagon to assay his visitors. I guess he smelled trouble too.

"Howdy, boys," he said casually.

"Lo, Ben." Norcliff stepped down from his roan to lean against the wagon. "We're on sort of an unpleasant errand."

"Yeah?" Ben straightened his big body a trifle. He always met unpleasantness that way, straight up and smiling. His fingers fished a sack of makings out of his vest pocket and shaped up a smoke as he waited for Norcliff to go on.

"It's this surge of horse stealin'," the latter continued evenly. "And that Injun of yours. We've about decided they're tangled up together."

"That's pretty strong talk," Ben retorted, dragging a match slowly along the wagon-tire. "You got anything to back it up?"

"I figure I have."

Ben sucked in a gulp of smoke, and I noticed the way his fingers were worrying the match-stick into tiny bits. Then he demanded evenly: "Let's hear it!"

Norcliff hoisted one foot onto the wheel-hub, absently pushing the spurs around with the flat of his thumb. I could almost see his mind sorting over the various ways to begin. He was plainly after help, and not hostilities.

"These rustlers," he said at last, "are a clever outfit. You know how they take only stray bunches of stock from odd corners of the range when there are no riders in that section. Nobody ever got a glimpse of them; but I did manage to cut a little fresh sign last week. This showed they used unshod horses and headed out north toward the Thunderbolt Hills. And that pretty well pins it down to an Injun set-up."

Ben nodded slightly. I could tell about what he was thinking. Indians were the only ones who habitually rode unshod horses, while north through the Thunderbolts was a direct route to the Reservation. The Agency Indians, as a whole, were decently law-abiding; but like their white neighbors, a few unreconstructed characters would occasionally jump the Reservation to ride with their imaginations until caught. It happened about every so often.

"Now, concluding it is Injuns," Norcliff went on, "it's hardly reasonable they could work so smooth unless they had a spotter here in the valley. And who would be spottin' for them but another Injun? Furthermore, the kid has worked himself in pretty solid with you, which might explain the fact that yours is the only outfit that hasn't been raided."

"But I know Tom's not—"

"Wait a minute!" Norcliff butted in on Ben's protest. "Where was this redskin s'posed to be ridin' day before yesterday?"

I saw Ben's eyes narrow tensely as he tramped his cigarette-butt in among the match pieces. I guess he could sense the trap beginning to snap shut. Yet his voice held steady as he answered:

"He was moving a bunch of two-year-olds up onto Coyote Bench."

"Then how come Shorty, here, saw him sneakin' into the Thunderbolts along about noon?"

Our eyes shifted to Shorty. The Thunderbolt Hills were miles east of Coyote Bench.

"You sure it was Tom?" Ben snapped.

"Absolutely!" Shorty cracked back. "No chance for mistake. Besides, he was on that Shoshone horse of yours."

I felt my breath catch hard. I remembered Tom's riding Shoshone that day. We had saddled together. And nobody could mistake that big, blazing sorrel.

"Did you trail him up?" Ben was speaking again.

"Tried to," Shorty replied. "Kept on his tail for round three-quarters of an hour; then he slipped me in some branchin' cañons. Them hills are a plumb jigsaw puzzle an' I couldn't locate him no more after that. He prob'ly winded me."

Shorty braced back in the saddle with his head up as if he was waiting for us to start clapping. He was pretty proud of his job.

It made me sore for a minute. The idea of his trying to build a case against Tom that way! Then my own afternoon's experience rose up to slap me back on my heels, and I changed my mind about saying anything.

"Anything else?" Ben asked. His voice sounded plenty hollow.

"Well,"—and Norcliff thumbed his spur rowel thoughtfully—"Pinchpenny Schenck lost eleven head off the Piñon Creek Flats that same night. It's the second bunch he's lost. And that's another important angle."

"Yeah, you gotta admit your Injun'd never overlook a chance to help raid old Pinchpenny!" Shorty horned in eagerly.

It was easy to see where this reasoning led. Old Pinchpenny had cheated Tom out of two months' wages the fall before, then beat him up when he tried to collect. And anybody knows the length of an Indian's memory.

"So that's how it is," Norcliff went on after a moment. "We understand your liking for the kid, but he's forced our hands. We're asking you to turn him over. If he can clear himself, I'll be as glad as anybody. But we've got



to have a showdown. You can see that!"

"Yes, I see your point," Ben said slowly, carefully sorting his thoughts. "Horse-stealing can't be excused. Not even among friends. But I still believe you've read your sign wrong. Tom just doesn't lit that kind of a pattern."

"Injun cussedness never does till you git it in a corner!" Shorty grunted. "A necktie-party's the only way—"

"That'll do, fella!" Ben's whiplash voice eased the soggy lump that had suddenly lopped into the pit of my stomach. "If you came over here to—"

"We didn't," Norcill broke in bluntly. "Shorty's off his orbit. But we do insist on some action."

"You'll have it," Ben nodded. "But not in any half-cocked fashion. And without any more of this necktie hog-wash!"

Shorty took that and said nothing. He got pretty red, though.

"Now," continued Ben, "you boys let me handle this. I'll plant my whole outfit to cover the kid's every move. If he is up to anything, some of us will soon spot it. In which case, I'll bring him in pronto. How's that?"

"Fair enough, Ben," Norcill stood up and shoved out his hand. "That'll be fine!"

I made me feel better to see that handshake. I knew Norcill was hard, but square, and Ben was about the whitest thing that ever stood on two legs. With them in accord, Tom wouldn't be railroaded on suspicion.

But was it only suspicion? That thought kept hammering at the base of my brain as I watched the two upper valley men ride away. Shorty's story had stirred up too many fresh ideas for my own experience to make for restful thinking.

I was glad to make it into the bunkhouse before Ben turned his attention toward me. I was in no shape to meet his mind-reading ability. Maybe I had the wrong angle on things, but I couldn't figure where shooting off my mouth would help anything. I'd have staked my last breath on the Indian. You can't partner with a man for six months without finding out something about how he's built inside. But this line-up of evidence held too many possibilities that couldn't be overlooked. I flopped down on a bunk and wrapped my head in a cold soggy blanket of pure midnight gloom.

I was still there when Charley Morse and the Indian came in just after sundown. They were both skylarking as though there wasn't a blemish on the whole world. I rolled over and sat up, trying to decide whether to be more disgusted with them or myself.

"Where you yahoos been hidin' out today?" I grunted, cocking one eye for facial expressions.

"Not piled up in the bunkhouse, like you," Charley retorted. "We're workin'-men."

"Yes," Tom chimed in, "we ride plenty. All of Wagonwheel for me, an' Charley jus' in from big horse-hunt through river brakes. But you—huh! Mus' be bunkhouse puncher, eh, Charley?"

"Bunkhouse puncher is right!" Charley grinned. "Them's the kind that always laughs at us workin'-men."

I quit. I knew when I was whipped. And I hadn't found out a thing.

Nor did I discover anything more that evening. I couldn't ask direct questions without exposing my hand, and Tom's face was blank as a Chinaman's when I did auger him around to speak of his all-day whereabouts. I went to sleep dreading to think of what might turn up before too long.

I guess that was what made me so restless that night. I kept rousing every little while for no apparent reason. I woke up the last time around midnight. That time, I stayed awake.

I judged it was about twelve. The moon had just crawled up the ridge behind Squaw Butte. My ears caught the merest whisper of sound as I snapped wide awake in the darkness. For a moment I lay there, trying to locate the disturbance. Then my eyes swung around to the bunkhouse door. It was moving silently. The next instant a slim body was outlined against the moonlight, pulling the door shut behind it.

Tom Little-bearl! There could be no mistaking that pantherlike body. I half rose up in bed, mouth open to speak, then sank slowly back down. My tired brain started going back around the same weary circle. I was beginning to realize what they meant by a little knowledge being a bad thing.

Conscience and common sense told me to go to Ben with what I knew. The Indian was certainly up to something. He had been fully dressed and packing his boots. Still, I just simply couldn't pry myself out of bed. I'd once watched the finish of a pair of horsethieves. It hadn't been pretty. And for me to shove the only real side-kicker I'd ever had into the same picture—well, it was too much!

Anyhow, I reasoned into my pillow, if Tom was pulling something, Ben would find it out soon enough; if he wasn't, my raising a ruckus would only make a bad matter worse. I decided to sit tight. We'd see how things stacked up after the Indian got back.

YES, perhaps I was sort of a moral coward that night. I won't argue. I was just an ordinary human kid with a cold lump in his stomach. And I did want to do the best I could for everybody concerned. It didn't win me any sleep, though. I was still staring wide-eyed at the ceiling when, shortly before daylight, I heard a horse pound into the yard. It slid to a stop at the ranch-house, and someone hammered on the door.

I had my head out the window in two quick moves, but it was still too dark to see much. It was a long hundred yards across to the house. I could make out the shadowy blotch of a horse, its head sagging low from hard riding, beside the porch. Then I heard the squeal of an opening door, followed by the mumble of voices.

Bad news? It must be! Nothing else would cause a man to run a horse to a whisper at that time of night. And from my position, I could feature bad news only as being something connected with Tom Little-bearl.

My legs felt suddenly cold and clammy below the hem of my shirt-

tail. In fact, I was kind of shaking all over as I crawled back into bed and bogged my head in the pillow. It looked like the pay-off for sure!

Minutes later, I heard the visitor disturbing the horses in the corral; changing mounts, I knew by the sounds. Then again the drumming pound of hoofs headed down the creek, to turn north toward the Thunderbolt Hills.

I lay there cold as a frog, knowing what was coming. Nor had I long to wait. It seemed scarce a dozen breaths until Ben stuck his head in the bunkhouse, bellowing:

"All hands out, pronto! Rustlers hit our horses on Sage Flat. We're on their trail. Bring your guns an' get goin'!"

Then he was gone, his feet pounding toward the corral. The bunkhouse was in an uproar until Baldy Peters got a lamp lighted and rescued his pants from the waterbucket. "What—Where—How—" Nobody had an answer. And nobody waited for answers as they grabbed for clothes and weapons.

Charley Morse was the first out, diving through the door with his gunbelt in one hand and Dude Evans' boot on his left foot.

Dude yelled an objection, hopping on one stockinged foot, but Charley was too far gone to hear.

Ben had his own horse saddled and was busy roping out more mounts when we reached the corral. There was no time for explanations. And personally, I wasn't asking for any just then. When we surged away from the

ranch in a cloud of dust, I was content to stay back in the tail of the procession. I was afraid somebody might start wondering why Tom wasn't among us; and I hoped they would get it all figured out without my help.

This spookiness held me off by myself as we loped along toward the Thunderbolts. I naturally wondered who had brought the news, but hadn't the nerve to ask.

We were halfway around Buzzard Butte when the sun popped out from behind Big Medicine Mountain. The Thunderbolts were only three or four miles ahead. I couldn't help wondering if we were to meet riders from the other ranches, or what. That early-morning caller must have given Ben some definite program.

CURIOSITY finally got the better of me. I decided to crowd up ahead and hunt a little information. The rest of the outfit was bunched alongside Ben. We were fogging it down a long grassy slope at the time. I spurred up, angling over to the right in Jed Hart's direction. I knew Jed would tell everything he knew without stopping to ask questions.

Jed, however, never got that opportunity to talk. I was almost up to him when Ben's yell swung me around:

"There he is. This way, boys!" he called, at the same time throwing up one hand in a circling wave as he cut sharp left downhill.

I reined around with a jerk, trying to locate what he had spotted. Then I saw. One glance was enough to jam

the breath back down my throat. A lone rider was sitting his horse on a little pinnacle across the bottom. There could be no mistaking that big Shoshone horse nor the clear-cut figure of Tom Little-bear on top of him. There was no other such pair in the country.

But why was he sitting there? With the start he had, he should have been halfway across the Reservation already. Did he want to be caught? Surely he wasn't trying to hang onto the innocent pose. He must be crazy! And how could I warn him?

A moment later he started moving down the slope toward us. I knew it was all off then. He was a gone Injun!

I sneaked a glance around at the other boys. Then I got another jolt. Nobody was acting hostile. Instead, most of them were showing open grins. It sure had me puzzled. And Ben's first words only made it more so.

"Hello, Tom," he said. "Have any luck?"

"Okay," Tom answered, swinging the sorrel in close. "They go up Oxbow Cañon. Got long one-hour start."

"Think we can catch 'em?"

"Uh-huh, if we make cut-off."

"What do you mean—cut-off?"

Tom stepped down from his horse and squatted on his boot-heels. One hand reached out for a dried goldenrod stalk while the other smoothed out a little circle of bare ground. "See!" He drew a long wavy line in the dust, looping it around in a lopsided crescent. "This Oxbow Cañon, where thieves go."



"That's pretty strong talk," Ben retorted. "Got anything to back it up?"

The rest of us were all down, bunched around him. We knew how Oxbow Cañon cut a half circle through the Thunderbolts to open out onto the Reservation on the far side. So far as we knew, it was the only passable route across that upended territory.

"Now," Tom shoved his stick across the neck of the loop he'd drawn, "we cut through here. Save eight, ten mile. Get plenty ahead. Grab 'em sure."

"But can we get through?" Ben demanded. "I never heard of anybody finding a trail across that mess. It's one tough layout."

"Plenty tough," Tom agreed, "but can do. My uncle cross there one time. He told me of it. I can go like he say."

"Maybe," Ben shoved his hat over one eye and scratched the back of his head thoughtfully. "Second-hand information from years back is kinda—"

"Aw, let's gamble on the kid," Baldy Peters broke in. "These Injuns know things us whites never will find out. Anyhow, them rustlers've got too much lead for a tail chase."

Ben nodded agreement to that, and a couple other voices endorsed the idea. A moment later, he motioned Tom to lead out. It did look like the best chance—it *did* work.

I'll admit my curiosity as to where Tom might lead us was plenty high, but it wasn't a patching to the wonderment his riding on the posse end of the chase caused me. I just couldn't make the two halves of the picture fit. And it was nearly a half hour later before I got a chance to pull up beside Ben long enough to ask how come.

The latter grinned openly at my mystification. "Tom's been shooting square all through," he answered. "This is his own play. He explained most of it when he routed me out this morning."

"Was that him?" I blurted out before I thought.

Ben nodded, pausing suddenly to study my face with an odd expression. I guess he saw plenty of color there, from the way I felt. However, he only grinned quizzical-like and said, "I might've known!"—whatever that meant.

In the next breath, he went on to tell how Tom had discovered the thieves were some renegade members of his own tribe. Naturally loyal to his people, he had tried to locate the outlaws and head them away from further rascality before somebody got hurt. It was the preceding Tuesday afternoon that he finally found their camp. That was the day Shorty Wiggins tried to trail him. At the time I saw him, he had been on the way to see if the

bad boys had taken his advice. He found they hadn't. Instead, they were planning another raid. They wouldn't tell him just what they had in mind, but something gave him the hunch they were aiming at a bunch of Broken Arrow horses Ben had running down on the llats.

This put him out on a limb. He couldn't warn Ben without exposing his tribesmen, and he thought too much of Ben to let matters ride. He finally decided to guard the horses himself and say nothing.

But that didn't work out so well. The rustlers beat him to it. They had the herd already on the run when he reached the flat. Right there, Tom dumped his blood-ties overboard and hightailed to the ranch for help. He knew the outlaws would have to swing clear around below Splitrock Cañon, in order to ford the river, so he figured he would have time enough to rouse Ben, then pick up their trail while we were getting on the job.

Maybe you think this information didn't clear the sky for me! I felt like a million as I slid down a gravelly slope after Ben and started picking my way across a tricky rockslide. I wished I could get up next to Tom and sort of tell him how good I felt, but he was well out ahead and I had my hands full trying to keep my horse from sliding over into the cañon just then.

In fact, everybody had about all they could do to keep themselves right side up. It was about the raggedst tangle of broken gorges and jumbled



Hazing their stolen horses, the three rode right into our arms.

Tom cut loose with some jargon that sounded like a witch-doctor's curse.



hills that ever lay outdoors. Where the hills weren't sliced off by sheer bare cliffs, they were studded with bald rimrock ledges; each rock-walled cañon was worse than the last, and all were interlaced in a snarl that had no more head and tail than a tangle of store twine in a kid's pocket. The whole mess looked as if something that had been baked in the devil's own furnace and then cracked in all directions during the cooling.

To describe that ride would make a story in itself. Leading our horses along narrow ledges that were mighty thin lines in still thinner space. Crawling over smooth rock slopes that were nearly as bad. Picking our way across bare rimrocks that overhung boulder-studded gorges far, far below. Sliding down through jagged crevices in the rim and crawling back up over treacherous shifting slide-rock. A score of times it looked as if we'd reached the end of the road. Yet Tom always found the spot he was looking for, usually the only passable course, and led us on.

How anybody could remember four-year-old wongled directions through such a conglomeration of disrupted nature is beyond me. Tom, however, plunged right along without batting an eye, even when it looked as if we were riding plumb off the end of the world. If I hadn't been so sure of him, I'd have sworn he was pulling a grand whizzer while his friends escaped. I guess some of the other boys were beginning to think that same thing before we slid down that last steep slope into Oxbow Cañon.

And we were in time. The cañon floor was still trackless. Baldy slapped the Indian on the back and yelled his own brand of sulphur-tinted praise for the accomplishment. But Tom didn't seem any too happy about it. In fact, he was downright gloomy. He rode off, slumped down like Old Man Misery himself, when Ben began scattering us up both sides of the cañon.

Dude Evans and I both remarked about that as we picked out a hiding-

spot. All we could figure was that this trip on top of his night ride had sort of fagged him out.

However, we didn't have much time to worry about it just then. Ben was hurrying us all under cover for a surprise attack. His idea was to make it as easy as possible while trying to prevent anybody from getting hurt.

And it was easy. The three Indians, hazing their stolen horses down the cañon, rode right into our arms twenty minutes later. I sort of regretted that at the time. I was all set to get me a sure-enough scalp. But the reds came into camp without a holler when they saw we had them freed.

Tom stayed out of that part of it. The first move he made was just before we got on our horses, after rounding up the bad boys. He turned suddenly and walked over to one of the outlaws with sort of a set expression on his face. The rustler, a half- or three-quarter-breed, by his looks, turned to face him with a hard-eyed, contemptuous sneer. Tom's face was just as hard. His voice was even harder as he cut loose with some jargon that sounded like a witch-doctor's curse to me. Whatever it was, it sure made the 'breed act like a whipped dog. I never saw such a sudden let-down in anybody.

"Looks like Tom was gettin' in his I-told-you-so," Charley Morse grinned, reaching for his saddle-horn. "Must

be describin' a horse-lifter's future life."

I don't know if Tom heard that or not, but he suddenly spun on one heel and stalked woodenly across to his horse. And he was anything but happy. The sharp pinched look that had settled down around his nose made me wonder if that lecture didn't have more behind it than any of us had guessed.

I was still wondering an hour later. We were drifting back up the cañon, behind the recaptured horses and our candidates for the State Pen, when my curiosity finally got the best of me. I eased my horse over toward Tom while I rolled a smoke; then I asked him for a match, after feeling in a couple of pockets.

I got my cigarette going and hooked one knee over the saddle-horn to laze along for a little conversation. "You gave that tall jasper quite a sermon," I offered quizzically. "You must know him pretty well?"

Tom's answer pulled my mouth the rest of the way open and just about cured me of asking personal questions.

"Yes, I know him," he said, staring straight ahead over the big sorrel's ears. And I could see that pinched look draw down tighter around his mouth, while his eyes took on a strained, far-away expression. "That,"—and his voice almost faded out—"that's my half-brother."



CRISIS IN HELL

HIS SATANIC MAJESTY, BEEZEBUB, PRINCE OF DEVILS, (known affectionately throughout the plant as "B. Z.") sat moodily at the conference table, surrounded by his department heads and a few prominent stockholders. Through the window he could see Furnace No. 4. No smoke came from its stacks; and across the view a common laboring devil paced slowly, carrying a placard which read: "UNFAIR!—Stokers and Spear-Sharpener's Local 13."

With a sigh, His Majesty turned to his General Manager. "What can you tell me about all this, Roy?"

Roy shrugged. "I just got back from the meeting at Union Cavern. They mean business, all right, B. Z. Production is off forty per cent, as of even date, and we have less than ten days' fuel on hand."

"What happened at the Cavern?"

"Oh, there was a lot of inarticulate shouting and screaming, but it boils down to this: our labor is terribly overworked. That's a fact, B. Z. We may as well face it. We've got the same number of workers as when we opened the plant; on the other hand, the number of customers has increased something like two thousand per cent in the last five hundred years."

His Majesty gave a low whistle. "As much as that?"

Roy nodded soberly. "I went over the figures myself. We simply haven't the personnel or the equipment to handle 'em. Do you know there are actually customers walking around that haven't been dipped in hot pitch for a week? What kind of production

is that, B. Z.? And as for equipment—well, for one thing, the lab reports that the temperature of the whole plant has fallen some four hundred degrees in the century, our furnaces are always breaking down, and the sulphur we're getting these days is full of sand and gravel. Why, do you know, I saw a new arrival—just this morning—walk up to Fire and Brimstone No. 12, turn around, and spread his coat-tails! And just try to find a good standard pitchfork! More than half are missing a tine, and those that aren't, won't hold a good point any more. That's the way it goes. Take the Loathsome Department—do you realize that less than ten per cent of our reptiles have a full set of teeth?"

WITH a heavy frown, His Majesty turned to the Manager of Maintenance and Supply: "Well, Willbur?"

Willbur raised his claws helplessly. "It's because everybody in my department has been forced to grab a spear and help with the customers; that's why. We just haven't a single moment to stop and fix anything."

His Majesty pondered, then turned to his General Manager. "What do the strikers want, Roy?"

Roy grunted: "A forty-hour week, time and a half, two weeks' off at Halloween, a stipulation that no imp or devil be required to handle more than twenty customers an hour—and a lot of minor things like Social Security and free ice-cream."

His Majesty snorted a blue flame. "That'd put us out of business."

"Of course it would, B. Z.," nodded

Roy. "But," he added, "so will the strike."

Silence fell over the conference table, broken only by the scrape of a cloven hoof or the rustle of leathery wings. Somewhere in the plant a customer howled; but each executive was aware that the anguish lacked quality—it was not up to standard.

"How would it be," suggested the Personnel Chief, "if we took steps to increase our working force? Why don't we expand?"

"Where are you going to get moreimps and devils?" asked His Majesty. "There haven't been any new ones invented since the Stone Age. You know that."

"But couldn't we work out some sort of point system? I mean, give each customer two points every ten years—or maybe, if he took Continuous Roasting, we'd allow him three points. Then when he accumulated—oh, say a hundred points, we could promote him to Apprentice Imp. That way we could build up personnel."

BUT His Majesty shook his head. "It wouldn't be constitutional. These damned customers have to be serviced for all eternity; there's no provision for promoting them."

"All right," said the head of the Tantalization Bureau, "then why not cut down on our immigration quota? Why should we let in just any average wicked guy? Why not boost the requirements? That way we'd cut down on the number and raise the quality."

"Nope," replied His Majesty firmly. "Our original contract provides spe-



A searching and significant adventure in satire

by GILBERT WRIGHT

Who wrote "The Great Gizmo" and other off-the-beaten-track stories.

cifically that anybody who wants to go to hell can do so. As a matter of fact, that's in the very first paragraph. Do you want us to lose our franchise?"

"Well," said the Manager of Uncleanliness, "of course, I'm just thinking out loud, B. Z. But it seems to me that if we can't increase our staff and we can't cut down on immigration, there's only one way out: We've got to make it possible for one devil to handle more customers. I visualize a sort of conveyor-belt system—customers arranged head-to-foot and slid under a punch-like thing filled with

spears. Maybe we could use fire-jets too—relieve the monotony. Anyhow, with a contraption like that, one imp at the throttle could handle a regiment without getting off his stool."

His Majesty brightened for an instant, then frowned gloomily. "Dangerous—" He shook his head. "According to tradition, each customer must be prodded by a spear or pitchfork held in the hands of a devil. Now, if you start spearing people by machinery, you break with tradition—" He glanced meaningfully about the table and lowered his voice. "If we take away the tradition of hell, what have we got left?"

All turned pale; and to cover his confusion, the Manager of Uncleanliness began sharpening the point of his tail with a small file.

"Look," said the Curator of Monstrosities, "I'm feeling around for an idea. I don't say I've got anything, but I think we ought to grasp at any straw. What I mean is, if more people

went over to our Competitor, we wouldn't be so damnably crowded. Isn't that right?"

"Obviously," replied His Majesty. "But probably they're overcrowded too. Maybe they've raised their standards, and that's why we're getting such a play."

"That's actually not the case, B. Z.," said the Chief of Intelligence quickly. "My operatives inform me that the Pearly Gates are left open and unguarded. They don't even check credentials any more. And as for the City—vacancy signs everywhere; the warehouses are full of unused harps and haloes, and it's a rare thing to see half a dozen souls—even Sundays on Golden Boulevard."

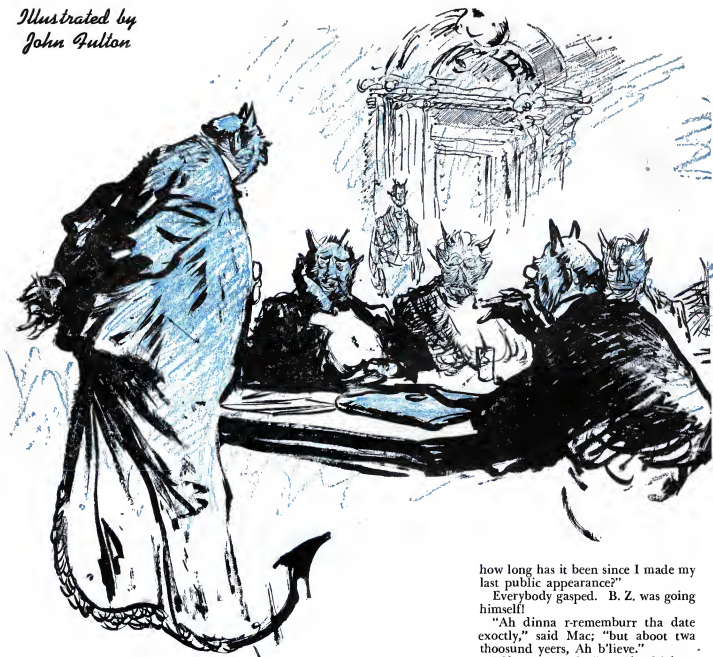
"Umh," mused His Majesty. "Odd—very odd! What do you make of it, Edgar?"

The Chief of Intelligence thought for a moment. "It must be," he said slowly, "because their sales organization has fallen down on the job.



"The temperature of the plant has fallen . . . our furnaces are always breaking down—"

Illustrated by
John Fulton



They're just not saving as many souls as they used to—that's why we've been under such pressure."

His Majesty snorted. "Sales force! They haven't got a sales force. Salesmen, yes—millions of 'em. But no organization. Each guy is out making the rounds trying to sell the same product under his own particular label. I never could understand that kind of merchandising. Now you take us—" A reminiscent look came into his eyes. "We've only had one salesman: that was me. 'I made one sale; that was Eve. Since then the product has sold itself—and why? Because we have an uncomplicated, standardized product, in an attractive package. One sample, and we've made a lifelong customer."

"I've got it," cried Roy suddenly. "It all adds up. Do you know when it was that we first began to be overcrowded? I'll tell you, and I think the

records will back me up. It was when our Competitor's salesmen stopped giving us publicity. They used to save a lot of souls by pointing out the terrors of Hell. They don't go in for that much any more. Am I right, Edgar?"

The Chief of Intelligence nodded. "I believe you may have something there."

All looked eagerly at Roy as, flushed with conviction, he continued: "We've got to get publicity. Scare 'em away from here. If our Competitor won't help us, let's take over ourselves—go to earth and terrorize 'em; make our own publicity, and make it hot."

His Majesty smiled around the table. "You see, boys, what it takes to be General Manager? Roy, here, got right to the heart of the problem and dug up the solution." He turned to the Keeper of the Archives: "Mac,

how long has it been since I made my last public appearance?"

Everybody gasped. B. Z. was going himself!

"Ah dinna r-rememburr tha date exoctly," said Mac; "but aboot twa thousand years, Ah b'lieve."

"Close enough—" His Majesty turned to the Chief of Intelligence: "What's going on up there now, Edgar?"

"Oh, the same old routine. They're trying to catch their breath after the worst war in history, as usual."

"Good—that's how it was the last time." His Majesty called his valet.

"Jake, get my wardrobe in order. I'll go as I've gone before—common, average-looking citizen, inconspicuously dressed. You work out the details. Oh—" His Majesty fixed Jake with a piercing stare. "Don't go too heavy on the details. Last time you provided me with bunions, remember?"

Jake hung his head as the conference ended.

HIS MAJESTY made his appearance on earth by coming up out of a subway in New York City. He found himself rather rumbled and out of



His Majesty smiled around the table. "You see what it takes to be General Manager? Roy, here, got right to the heart of the problem and dug up the solution."

breath. He looked about fifty-five, had a noticeable paunch, and was dressed in a blue serge suit, gray hat and new tan shoes. Jake—diabolical, painstaking artist that he was—had also provided him with bifocals, pains in the lower legs, and a loose plate.

Standing for a moment on the sidewalk, His Majesty studied the set faces that flowed by him in two hurrying, opposite streams. He was reminded of the faces back at the plant—especially the faces of those customers who had spent a century or so on Project 181: a high-speed treadmill with red-hot steps, each customer being provided with a Class C Rodent to gnaw his vitals.

After consulting a notebook, His Majesty entered a building and took the elevator to the fiftieth floor. He entered the office of Flannigan and Flannigan, Theatrical Agents.

"The name?" asked the girl at the switchboard.

"The Devil," replied His Majesty, removing his hat.

She looked at the pad on her desk. "I don't see any appointment for you, Mr. Devil," she said presently. "Was

there maybe something I could help you about?"

"I wish to secure a theater," said His Majesty. "I want to put on a play that I am backing."

"Oh, just a minute—" She spoke rapidly into the telephone in a low voice, and before she had finished, both Flannigans rushed out, seized His Majesty affectionately, and bore him inside.

"A theater you want, eh?" beamed Moe. "Sit right here."

"Yes, a large theater, the larger the better. I expect to fill the house every night for years." His Majesty seated himself as the brothers dropped into twin chairs behind the mahogany desk.

MOE looked at Sol, and Sol cleared his throat. "Theaters run into heavy sugar, I suppose you know?"

His Majesty drew a slim packet of bills from his coat pocket and flipped it out on the desk. Sol fluttered the bills once—"A hundred grand!"

Moe took the package, fluttered it, nodded. He then fluttered it half-way, divided with Sol. Sol fluttered his half, nodded. After putting the money in their billfolds, both brothers clasped their hands on the desk and looked at His Majesty attentively. "What kind of a show you got?" asked Sol.

"I imagine you would call it a pageant," said His Majesty. "It will be unique among all the spectacles that have appeared on earth. Each member of the cast is an immortal—an authentic importation from Hell. The effect will be one of stark terror; it will shrivel the heart of any beholder who ever had an evil thought; women will wail for forgiveness; strong men will dash screaming from the theater to mend their ways; the entire city—"

"Some kind of magic act?" interrupted Sol.

"What'd you say your name was?" asked Moe.

"The Devil."

Sol nodded, "That'll look nice on the marquee."

"I don't think I ever caught your billing," remarked Moe thoughtfully. "Where'd you open last?"

"This will be my first personal appearance in any theater," said His Majesty, with some condescension.

"Well—" The brothers exchanged a glance, then shrugged. "The hundred grand says you'll get your theater," said Moe.

"If that's not enough, let me know," replied His Majesty.

"We will," chorused the brothers. Then: "How about cast, production?" inquired Sol.

"I have my own cast, scenery and all that. I'll import them direct from Hell for each performance. Now,

how about advertising? I imagine a full-page ad run for a week in all the local papers will be sufficient. Of course, after the first performance we won't need to advertise."

The brothers looked at each other, then at His Majesty. "Who," asked Sol gently, "did you say you was?"

"The Devil," said His Majesty with some asperity. "I am the Devil—Lucifer, Belial, Old Scratch—in short, the Devil."

The brothers sat forward on their chairs.

"You mean," asked Moe, "that guy down there—the real Devil?"

His Majesty nodded shortly. "Now, about the tickets: I want to distribute them personally to a select group of customers—"

"Wait a minute," said Sol. "This ain't beginning to look too good. How'd you get hold of all that jack, Mac?"

"The money? Why, naturally, I can have anything I want."

"Oh, so you can have anything you want," said Sol, winking at Moe. "Now, ain't that convenient! Let's play like—well, supposing that right now you should want a short beer?"

His Majesty handed Sol a short beer.

"My God," said Sol, "but that was neat. You're terrific!" He turned to Moe: "You ask him for something. Anything you don't think he could have on him."

Moe screwed up his face in thought for a moment: "How about maybe a mud turtle?"

His Majesty placed a mud turtle on the desk.

"These guys always beat me," sighed Sol. "If I've seen one trick, I've seen a million, and I never caught on to any of 'em." He turned to Moe: "This guy's not crazy—he's terrific. Houdini himself never pulled a mud turtle out of the air."

His Majesty arose threateningly. "Gentlemen, you are annoying me. You do not realize, apparently, that I actually am the Devil. Look at me!"

THERE was a crash as of cymbals in a tunnel; the light in the room turned a ghastly blue. Instantly His Majesty grew nine feet tall; his arms became writhing pythons with darting tongues; his head was that of a slaving crocodile, and his spear-tipped tail thrashed wildly about like a dropped fire-hose.

The Flannigan brothers watched, fascinated.

After a moment His Majesty blew a final sulphurous flame from his nostrils, resumed his former shape, and sat down. "Well, gentlemen?"

The Flannigans exchanged a glance and a nod. "Maybe we'd like a piece of the show," said Sol. "How are your card-tricks?"

LATER His Majesty entered a park and seated himself upon a secluded bench. Taking a boxlike instrument from his pocket, he pressed a button and spoke into it: "B.Z. calling Roy. B.Z. calling Roy. Come in, Roy. Over."

After a few seconds the box responded briskly: "Roy back to B.Z. I hear you loud and clear. Over."

"I've got the theater, Roy," said His Majesty. "Everything's set for the opening next Thursday night. Meanwhile, I'm going to pass out tickets to our prospective customers. Look in the files and tell me, for example, who's the most prominent violator of the commandment against Bearing False Witness. I don't mean some little guy lying about his income tax. Find me the men whose lies affect the most people. Over."

"Stand by," said Roy. After a moment, Roy spoke slowly. "I'm afraid you won't have enough tickets on this one item alone, B.Z. Bearing False Witness appears to be a whale of a big business. Do you want to tackle it under Communist Propaganda, News Slanting, Phony Advertising, Election Speech Promises or—"

His Majesty broke in doubtfully: "Well, I don't know, Roy. I hadn't realized this violation had been so well organized. Over."

"Stand by, B.Z.," replied Roy. "I'll check with Intelligence."

His Majesty waited, looking thoughtfully at the towering buildings; things had changed considerably since his last trip.

"Roy to B.Z. Edgar suggests you appear at a conference now going on in a shadowy corner of a heavily guarded laboratory in the sub-basement of—" And he named a famous university.

THIRTY high-ranking military men sat in folding chairs listening to a professor. The professor waved an Erlenmeyer flask about as he spoke. According to Roy, the people of the world were spending about ninety per cent of all their wealth and natural resources breaking the Commandment involved here.

"This," the Professor was saying, "comes close to being the ultimate in military weapons. Here"—he gazed lovingly at the flask—"we have a virus we have succeeded in developing. It has never existed on earth before; consequently the human system has absolutely no defense against it. A droplet of this virus released over a congested area will cause a highly contagious plague that will destroy every human being it attacks."

"But how about our side?" asked a three-star general. "What if the wind changes—won't we catch it?"

The Professor smiled. He was glad of the question: "We've taken that

into consideration, naturally. You see, we have put this virus through a special conditioning process. The infection will develop according to the dietary habits of the host. This sample, for instance, will attack only those whose principal articles of diet include rice, *Sauerbraten*, vodka, curry, and *shashlik*. It will be completely ineffectual against those who consume beefsteak, mashed potatoes, Bourbon whisky and banana splits."

NEXT His Majesty investigated that portion of the entertainment business specializing in the highly profitable enterprise of teaching the finer points of adultery. Any patron who applied himself to this form of artistic expression, not only soon came to covet his neighbor's wife—he had more than an even chance with her. Afterward, His Majesty took a few moments out, and slipping into a

plumber's shop, gave himself a refreshing bath with a blow-torch. . . .

Came Thursday, the night His Majesty's play was to open. Roy, back at the plant with the boys, called His Majesty several times without results. He tried at eight—just before curtain time—then at eleven, at twelve, at one and at three. Everybody was mystified.

However, it was a well-known fact that when B.Z. wanted to black out, he stayed blacked out. Even Edgar, the Chief of Intelligence, could throw no light on the subject.

Shortly after noon on Friday (Black Friday, incidentally) His Majesty appeared unannounced in Hell and quietly entered his office by a rear door. He sat at his desk for a time, his head in his claws. Finally, with a sigh, he flipped a switch and spoke into a communicator: "Appear, Roy," he said wanly.



There was a crash as of cymbals in a tunnel.



Instantly His Majesty grew nine feet tall. . .

Roy appeared. "Why, B.Z., I had no idea you were back. I tried all last evening to get you. . . What's wrong, Chief? You look terrible."

"Had a few drinks after the show," moaned His Majesty. "Their stuff makes our gall and wormwood taste like Sunday-school picnic punch."

"That's a shame. Well, how did the show go? Must have been a great performance, judging from what we sent you."

"Yes," said His Majesty dispiritedly, "I thought it had everything. Authentic to the slightest detail. The lightning had a fine corpse-like hue; the sulphurous fumes and other stinks were perfectly blended. And of course the screams and shrieks of the damned were genuine. We even went to the trouble to weave the curtain out of living serpents."

"That was a nice touch," said Roy admiringly.

His Majesty nodded. "I thought so too." He sighed. "I was seated on my throne in my most diabolical aspect, while before me a select corps of our most vicious devils worked out on a group of customers who couldn't take it. Really a rousing performance. And for atmosphere, we had samples of every evil and unclean thing coming and going downstage. Even had some six-foot bats flying out over the audience."

"Good," nodded Roy. "Good!"

"The performance ran a bit over four hours," said His Majesty. "The Flannigan Brothers thought that was a trifle long, but I insisted on getting across the feeling of eternity."

"Well, how did they take it? I mean, the audience?" asked Roy eagerly.

"I gave away," said His Majesty slowly, "four times as many tickets as there were seats. In spite of this, we

opened to a small house; and when we rang down the final curtain, there was nobody there but the cleaning-women. I asked them for their reaction, but they hadn't been watching." His Majesty drew a newspaper from his pocket, open to the drama section, and silently handed it to Roy.

Roy read aloud: "An odd little thing called 'Hell,' starring the Devil in person, opened and closed Thursday night at the Bryant. It was a masterpiece of technical ingenuity, and must have cost somebody a pretty penny; but it was not entertainment. We saw a vividly done chromo of the late Billy Sunday's corny old adversary holding court in a smelly furnace-room. Ten minutes later we were on the sidewalk looking for a taxi—a much more interesting experience."

Slowly Roy put down the paper. "It must have been because nobody really believed you were the Devil."

His Majesty shook his head. "No, it couldn't have been that. As a matter of fact, I had my birth-certificate framed in the lobby. It wasn't that, Roy. It goes much deeper. People aren't afraid of Hell; they don't believe in it, and don't worry about it."

"Well, they're sure coming here in droves, whether they believe in it or not."

"Certainly they are. Merely a matter of routine—it's in our contract: Violators of the Commandments go to Hell. And as far as I can see, their whole civilization is founded on breaking the Commandments. Anybody who can discover a new way to break a Commandment gets rich and famous."

"Well, that was the idea in the first place, wasn't it?" asked Roy. "Break the Commandments and you get material profit, but you lose your soul. So they've got a great material civilization, and we get all the souls. Hell of a note."

Rising, His Majesty walked slowly to the window and stood looking out over the plant. His wide bat-wings drooped pathetically.

Roy, at the table, looked on anxiously, his face greatly troubled. His Majesty's tail was fretfully digging splinters from the floor—a sure sign that he was emotionally upset.

"Well, Roy," said His Majesty, without turning, "I guess—" He paused for a moment. "I'm afraid we're through," he said huskily.

"Oh, no—" pleaded Roy.

TURNING, His Majesty advanced a few steps and stood with bowed head, his right claw thrust in among the scales on his breast. "It is over," he said softly.

"But, B.Z., we've got a good little plant here," protested Roy. "We'll get straightened around if we work

hard. Maybe we can install some oil-burners, or something."

"No, Roy. We aren't in it now; we don't serve any real purpose. Hell isn't here any more; it's on earth. We're only a feeble ten-cent sideshow, compared with what's going on in the main tent. Why, the tortures those people have brought on themselves by breaking the Commandments make anything we can do look childish! They don't fear the Hereafter any longer; they fear the present, and are terrified of the day-after-tomorrow. What have we got to offer compared with poverty, greed and war—the effects and memory of the last one, the

fear of another? I'll tell you—a beat-up little hot spear. And with a dull point, at that."

"But what are we going to do?" asked Roy. "We've got to punish the wicked; that's our job."

His Majesty nodded. "Of course, but we're going to have to change our methods. From now on we'll work at helping the people punish themselves. We'll have Jake put the entire personnel in modern dress, and we'll open an office in New York. Then we'll put a few good boys on the side of Management, and an equal number on the side of Labor. We'll plant an active crew in Washington—probably get what we need from the Department of Utter Confusion. Maybe we can even manage to get representation on the United Nations. Oh, we'll be able to add something, I'm sure."

"What about the plant here?" asked Roy. "I kind of hate the thought of abandoning it."

"I think we'll keep it just as it is," considered His Majesty. "We're all going to have to work harder than ever before in New York, and it'll be nice to have a quiet little place to go over the week-end. After all, a devil's got to get away from it all occasionally."

"What's going to happen now, when a wicked man dies?" asked Roy. "Where will he go, if we close up?"

His Majesty shrugged. "I suppose something will be provided. But as far as I'm concerned, when a modern man dies, he's already been through hell—in mind if not in body, and I'll gladly stamp his passport to that effect. . . . Now, Roy, close the main gate. Then call the boys, and we'll all get packed."



"What have we got to offer compared with poverty, greed and the fear of another war? I'll tell you—a beat-up little hot spear. And with a dull point, at that!"

BLUE BOOK will pay twenty-five dollars for each letter accepted by us for publication either in our "What Do You Think?" or "My Most Amusing Experience" department—which in this crowded issue we have here combined on one page. The author's full name and address must accompany the letters; but, if he prefers, initials only may be used for publication. No letters will be returned. All letters submitted will become the property of McCall Corporation. Address: "What Do You Think?" or "My Most Amusing Experience," Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

What Price Liberty?

THE next time you join in the singing of "America" with its opening line, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty," give a thought to the meaning of what you are singing and the price paid for the liberty mentioned in the song.

Like so many of the rest of us Americans, you are probably taking the liberty you enjoy too much for granted, not ever thinking of the price paid for it. But it *has* a price—a high price. If you doubt it, ask the widows, the fatherless and the bereaved parents of the boys who lie buried in Japan, France, Germany. Ask the fellow whose sleeve hangs empty or who

Our Readers' Forum

walks with a limp. He paid with his life or a part of his body for your liberty as well as his own.

But just what is this liberty of which we sing so fervently and then proceed to take so much for granted? Is it the freedom to choose our own manner of life—to do as we please, go where we like, get what we want, say what we please—in other words to live as we choose to live?

The answer is "No," for there is a natural law governing all our actions that is more inviolate, more exacting, than all of the laws on all of the statute books of the world. It is the Law of Consequences, and because of it we pay for every privilege we enjoy, every action we perform.

True, we are free to be unkind, rude, selfish, even cruel; but we are not free to escape the resentment, distrust and hatred that will accrue against us and eventually ruin our utmost happiness. We are free to live indolent, negligent, lazy lives, to "chisel" on someone else and take every petty advantage we can, *but we must pay for*

that sort of freedom by mediocre attainment, by taking a back seat, playing second fiddle to the man who has put his best efforts to work for him.

We are at liberty, if we choose, to accept the golden promises of a Utopia-to-be proffered by Communism and all of the other "isms" of this day and age, but we will pay, and pay dearly, in social, religious and economic slavery, ruled by relentless tyrants, if we are foolish enough to be misled by them. The experiences of the followers of Hitler and Mussolini, the limitations of life in Russia, clearly demonstrate what follows the misuse of true liberty.

To get what we want we must pay what it takes. To have friends, we must pay for them by being friendly. We must pay for love by loving; for success with work—hard work; for success does not come to us served on a silver platter.

What price liberty? The very best you have in you, if you would enjoy to the full its golden benefits.

R. E. M.

MY MOST AMUSING EXPERIENCE

The Private's Orders

HAVING been a member of the American Army officers' reserve for some time preceding World War Two, I was, just before the outbreak, called to report for active duty. In short order I was activated, and addressed to the Hawaiian theater.

Assigned to one of the smaller islands, another officer and I were put in charge of new, never-under-fire, G.I.'s detailed to do fortification construction work.

Suddenly the Japs struck. Most of us had never before experienced the nerve-racking shock of exploding bombs. It took more than will-power to remain at our prearranged positions; we knew our location was a fine spot for landing invasion forces.

Finally the attacking planes departed; a thick, pungent, almost startling, silence came. I was sent to inspect the sentry positions, ascertain their strength, their casualties.

I moved through the rough, rolling darkness of the terrain, expecting the fireworks to start again at any moment.

Suddenly, in front of me, a rifle blazed, and a wad of lead splattered dirt against my boots. The shot had come from the direction of a sentry-post—and no challenge had been given.

With my nerves raveling enough at their edges to stop me from distinguishing between friend or enemy fire, I tried a shout in the direction of my aggressor. "This is Lieutenant —, I want to inspect your post."

A quavery voice came back at me. "Who?" it wanted to know.

I repeated my desires, and awaited the word to advance.

The word never came—only a murmur of overly excited men, and the trembling voice again. "You can't inspect this post, sir. We're taking no chances. Go inspect another post, sir—please, sir."

The jittery tones told me that nothing human would enter that post alive. I decided to follow the private's order—the post was in capable hands.

L. E. S.

Captured Hammer

FOLLOWING the German surrender in North Africa, the fighter squadron I was in moved to the Cape Bon Peninsula, in Tunisia. We took over a former German air strip and proceeded to hammer the Island of Pantellaria.

The area that we were bivouacked in was a veritable treasure-trove of German equipment, from Luger pistols to

88-m.m. cannon. There was even a case of Italian medals, which were passed out, one to a man, in our chow line. They commemorated an event that never happened, the capture of the Nile.

Orders were to set up our tents in an olive grove, which had been the bivouac of the Germans. My buddy and I had our tent up in short order and took time out for a smoke. Near by us, two other G.I.s were having trouble driving their tent-pegs into the solid ground. After denting a German helmet and still not sinking a peg, one G.I. hunted up a heavier tool. A short search located something to his liking, and we heard the solid raps of pegs driven home. The eight pegs were quickly sunk, and the "hammer" was tossed away. It almost landed on me, and I reached over to see what it was. One glance was enough; then I threw it as far as I could. Those solid smashes upon eight tent-pegs had been done with a "potato masher"—in other words, a German hand-grenade.

I don't think I ever saw a more scared expression on anyone's face, than on the fellow who had used it, after I told him what it was—though my buddy said the look on my face was twice as bad, when I picked it up!

Richard E. Lasker.

HARD GUY

An American shares a Thames River Police job.

by LAWTON FORD

RIGHT then and there, brother, I tell you I wanted to take my hat off to the Limey. He stuck his head up over the steel armor in front of the helm and took a calm look at the dock. Some fellow off there in the dark was spraying our little tin can of a patrol boat with slugs from a Tommy-gun. Nosey grinned and spun the wheel over so we headed for the gun-flashes. The river was gleaming like a pistol barrel with orange-red dots winking along it toward us. All the twisted waterways of the Surrey Commercial Docks were surrounded by dark, looming warehouses and pier sheds.

My new gray fedora flew off and sailed across the churning wake of the little speed-boat to the tune of a whining buzz. Must have been a slug. The Limey looked at me and laughed. "Get down, you perishing blighter, before you get your ruddy 'ead drilled!" Can you imagine the nerve of that little guy? There he was puffing on his pipe as calm as you please, bawling me out for just nothing. I turned away from him and wiped a finger across my temple. That slug must have creased my scalp a little because a wet trickle was running down through my hair. Lucky I have red hair, and Nosey didn't see me wipe, or he'd have bawled me out more.

We ran up to the dock, and the fellow with the Tommy-gun jumped back and ducked into the warehouse alongside. Nosey swung us broadside and backed water. He picked up his police repeater rifle and spotted half a dozen shots slowly as we lost way. There weren't any of the doors and windows open that I could see. I suppose those slugs from Nosey's rifle had the effect of keeping the Jorgens mob under cover.

It wasn't really a mob, not like the mobs I used to know in Louisville; but for a London mob it was pretty important stuff. Anyway, they made it important, and that's why they don't have the same kind of mob wars over there we used to have in the States. This Jorgens mob was maybe ten guys, including Yank Jorgens, who was only a big front. He was supposed to be a real American mobster, an imported rod-man, but from what I'd heard of his work, he was probably just some

punk who got thrown out of a real gang or took it on the lam to save his skin, and set himself up in London as a tough.

The police boat scraped the dock, and Nosey said: "You stay here, Red, while I give the place a dekho." (That's British Army-India lingo for "take a look.") Some crust! He thought he was going to leave me out of it. I landed on the dock on his heels and pushed him to one side.

Nosey only comes up to here or my chest. He sticks his chin out, almost bumping his big nose on my collarbone, and snarls at me. "Get back," he yelps. "Stay in the boat. You aint officially with me at all. You might get hurt." I had to laugh.

We ran up to the warehouse and crept along it. Nosey was cussing under his breath, trying to get in front of me. We go by a closed double door and duck low past a boarded-up window. We see nothing, hear nothing. Nosey is disgusted.

Then someone blasts a shotgun off right by our heads, and we hit the dirt. I pop at the place the flash comes from with my personal automatic, which I aint supposed to have at all. Then Nosey is up and running back toward the patrol boat, and I see that we have been a couple of amateurs. Two guys are streaking for the boat ahead of Nosey!

They must have come out of one of the doorways we passed. The shot was supposed to lay us low while a couple of mugs made a break for our boat. I never thought those small-time Limey mobsters would give us much trouble, and I wasn't expecting them to make a run for it, or I never would have left the boat at all. I figured they would at least trade a couple of rounds of lead, or wait for us inside the shed. I guess getting away was more important to them than having any fun.

Nosey had dropped his rifle when the shotgun blast went off so close to us, so he didn't have anything to stop those guys with. I picked it up and let go a couple of slugs, taking care not to hit Nosey, who was gaining on them. The two mobsters did belly-whoppers on the dock.

Nosey looked disappointed when he came back to where I was kneeling. "I



would have had them," he complained, "but I expect you did right. Now give me that rifle and get back in the boat." You want to know something? I did it. And I'm glad I did, because right away I hear a siren, and a police patrol car swings onto the dock from the road way down to the end and comes rumbling out to where Nosey is standing. I aint even supposed to be anywhere in the neighborhood, least of all in Nosey's boat, so I duck and keep out of sight.

ASERGEANT steps out of the car and interviews Nosey in the beam from the headlight. "I heard shots," he says.

"Yessir," says Nosey. He must have pointed to the two mobsters on the dock. I hear steps and voices closer. "Got them both, did you? Well, keep your eyes peeled, Perkins. There are about eight more in there. Jorgens is one of them. We don't want the flatfeet to steal the show from us."

"I got plenty ammunition," says Nosey, like as if all he needs is a glimpse of one of the rods and the guy's a dead goose.

"You may get a chance to use it," says the sergeant. "They've got Plough



*Illustrated
by Arthur
Harper*

"I want him on my squad," says the flatfoot sarge. "I can use a slugger there."

Road lined with flatfeet with rifles, so the Jorgens band is between you and them." I suppose Plough Road is the other side of the warehouse. The sergeant claps Nosey on the shoulder. "Let's show them laudlubbers what the River Police is good for."

"I'll let the bobbies flush out the game," says Nosey, real cocky.

"Mind you, don't let anyone of them past you," says the sergeant. "And if the flatfeet break into the warehouse, I'll give you a long whistle. Then you'll know to take a good look at who comes out this side before you shoot. I'll send a man around to help you if I can spare one."

I hope he can't spare none or else I'll have to keep my head grubbing to the keel inside the boat all the time. I would have got my pants thrown in the cooler if those coppers ever saw me in Nosey's patrol. I was strictly unofficial, being only a pal of Nosey, and only along for the ride.

"Right," says Nosey, and the sergeant climbs back in the car and backs away. When it is safe to come up, I go "Psst!" to Nosey, and he comes over to the side of the boat. It's a low dock used for barges and small river tugs.

The gunwale of the police speedboat is only a foot or so below the dock.

"I got to get you out of here," says Nosey, looking up and down cautiously. "If Sergeant Connors ever finds out you was here, he'd suspend me off the River Police for a hundred years."

"I'll take a deep breath and swim underwater to the other side of the river," I say. "It's only half a mile."

"I got a better idea," says Nosey. "I'll konk you with my rifle-butt and drop you in where it's deepest. You'll be under water for days. . . . They'll never see you."

I have to laugh. Nosey tops you every time! "Let's compromise," I suggest. "I'll stay here and share the fun. You tell the sergeant I'm a zombie, if he sees me."

But Nosey don't look happy about it. "Suppose he sends another cop around here? What then?"

"Tell him I'm a reporter—writing up the story for the papers." It doesn't go over so good.

Nosey is a great little guy, but he worries too much. For guts and nerve and speed, you'd have to go a long way to find a guy like Nosey. I was in the Italian theater of operations with

him from May '41 to the end. I saw plenty of what Nosey could do when things were tough. I've been around myself. I've seen plenty. I know a good man, a hard nut, when I meet up with one. I cut mahogany in Guatemala, bossing a mill. I took members away from the Puglisi mob in Louisville, just because I don't like guys who are only tough behind a gun in a mob. I spent a winter on a pearling boat in the Red Sea. I built pipelines in Iran. I've seen plenty tough guys. This little squirt is more man in five feet than lots of big guys with thick necks and rocky fists.

I MET Nosey in a slit trench in Italy. It turned out he was beneath me when I did a belly-whopper in the dirt, when a low-flying Jerry plane chased me into an orchard. I always felt kind of sheepish after that, because he was such a calm little guy and I acted like a scared rabbit. He didn't make any move to push me off of him, just says: "Move down a little, chum—your belt-buckle is breakin' my teeth." I had to laugh. I climbed out of the trench. The Jerry had gone over by then, anyway, and I recovered my sense of hu-



"Get down, you perishing blighter, before you get your ruddy 'ead drilled!" the Limey hollered.

mor. I pulled him out and dusted him off. "Shame on you," I says, "hiding under a soldier." He grins and straightens his cap. He is wearing a British Army uniform.

"If I'd of known you was coming," he cracks, "I'd of baked a cake." He reaches back in the trench and pulls out a bottle. "Anyway, I can give you a drink to steady your nerves," he says. "Reverse lend-lease. I suppose I'll have to let you take a sip, on account of your nerves must be so bad."

We goldbricked together for a while after that. I always enjoyed the little guy's cocky air and his nerve. We made a funny pair, me being six-four and him about five feet even, but we had a good time on furlough once when we got away at the same time.

Then I met him in London the next winter after the finish of the war, and I learned he was on the Thames River Police. I guess only having to ride about in a patrol boat, their guys don't have to be big. Usually two of them ride together on a patrol, but this night Nosey is given a job of checking up on some barges in the Lady Dock, Greenland Dock and South Basin, and he was sent out alone.

Nosey calls me up and says since I am always pestering him to go for a ride on one of their boats, why, this is my chance. I meet Nosey at the Waterloo Bridge Stairs down from the Em-

bankment. We do a routine jaunt in and out of the dozens of twisting waterways on both sides of the Thames River. Those basins are loading and unloading pools in the commercial and warehouses districts, made by long piers and docks forming enclosures where barges can lay up.

This one we're in is near the Bermondsey section of London, a rough neighborhood. I guess Jorgens and his mob hang out in that section the most of the time. When the bobbies rounded them up, they headed for the docks and holed out in a pier shed alongside the water, and couldn't get away. We were heading for that dock when the mobster with the Tommy-gun, the one who creased my skull for me, got nervous and tried to detour us.

THE shed is so quiet I begin to get restless. Nosey is still as a mummy up on the dock. I begin to think that if one of the gangsters inside decides to take a pot-shot at my pal Nosey—why, Nosey has a very good chance of getting a hole in his head. The cops on the other side of the shed, in Plough Road, are giving the rats too much chance to get their bearings. They should ought to rush this gang. Nosey could take care of any that tried to come out this side, in a hurry.

Finally I am convinced Nosey is taking too much of the chances for get-

ting hurt. I decide to do something about it. I rummage around in the engine pit and find a flashlight. I slip over the gunwale of the patrol boat and hang there half in and half out of the water, between the side of the boat and the dock. I use the flash and throw a light underneath. It's all beams and joists and crosspieces, planked over by wide boards, and about four feet over the water. The greasy river has a crust of scum on it under there. I almost think I can see a few rats blinking at me. I tell myself I am really seeing something of the London Thames underworld.

I snap the flashlight button in the locked position so it won't go off, and I stick it in my belt, throwing the light upward. Then I go hand over hand under the dock, holding on to rafters and crosspieces until I reach a place I'm sure is under the middle of the dock shed. No one can see the light except maybe the guys in the shed above, through chinks in the floor boards. Then I don't worry about.

I look for a loose floorboard, and finally find one that looks right. I snap off the light and wait a minute. Then I swing my foot up and kick hard against the loose board. It flies up and away, and I hoist myself up through the opening, fast. My gun is in my hand, and I jump to one side.

As I guessed, the place is stacked with boxes and barrels, and there is no light. I can't see anybody. It is a sure thing the Jorgens mobsters are all sitting pretty behind boxes or such, waiting for a break. I know if I just start feeling around to locate one guy at a time, I'll never get anywhere. I got to give Nosey some action that will make them mobsters in too much of a hurry to be careful about their aim. I crawl to the wall of the shed on the land side and feel for a door. When I find one, I unlatch it and push it open suddenly. Then I whistle hard and throw a few shots into the center of the shed. There is just a little light comes in the door. I jump in and out of the doorway a couple of times and stamp my feet. The guys inside must think a half a dozen cops run into the shed. I fire my automatic a couple more times.

SURE enough, Jorgens hasn't got the nerve to make an interesting game out of it. A big door on the water side opens, and several guys dash out. They didn't want to play.

Nosey is right on the job. I hear his rifle welcoming them.

The flatfoot on Plough Road decide they better join up. Flashlights pop up all over the shed. Someone throws a beam of light through the door I opened, probably a squad-car spotlight. Cops come running in after me and grab several of the mob jumping around among the bales and boxes. It is quite a circus, what with guys yelling, lights flashing, a few shots, and some copper blowing on a whistle like crazy.

One big guy in a white sweater jumps out in front of me. He jams a hot rod into my middle. That is no time to figure it all out scientific, so I beat his hand away with my arm. I take a punch, riding it off my right shoulder, and counter with a heavy left cross to the button. Big Sweater crumples like a lily, his shots going wild.

Pretty soon there is some quiet, and I go out onto the dock by Nosey's boat. Nosey has three mobsters lined up against the shed. He is talking over his shoulder to the Sergeant, who was out to see him earlier.

"I see you dropped two more, Perkins." The Sergeant is very matter of fact in his speech. "That's four you got, and three more here reaching for the roof—that's seven. How come you didn't get the other three?"

"I had to let the bobbies get some of them, Sergeant," says Nosey, just as calm as ever. "I didn't want to hurt their feelings."

I had to bust in. "The bobbies only got two, Sergeant," I said. "I dropped one in the shed with a left cross. That makes it seven to two for the River Police. That's a fair average."

"It aint good enough!" snaps the Sergeant. "Any time the River Police is only better than the flatfeet by seven to two, I want to know about it. The River Police is usually ten to one over landlubbers."

"Modest, aint he?" I ask Nosey. "Say, who are you, anyway?" demands the Sergeant.

"Why, I'm just a River Police rooter," I say. "I came along as a cheering section. I'm a spectator."

"Maybe you are one of the Jorgens mob," snaps the guy. "Perkins, do you know this bloke?"

"Sure, Sergeant," says Nosey. "He's only kidding. He's really a mechanic—a lat-engine mechanic. I had to pick him up when I developed a little trouble. All in the line of duty, you know, Sergeant."

"I bet," says the Sergeant. "I don't like his looks."

Another sergeant comes out of the shed hugging the guy in the white sweater, the one I clipped. He dumps the guy down and wipes his forehead.

"Loi' love a duck!" says the River Police Sergeant. "That blighter is eleven feet long. Is he dead?"

"Only put to sleep with a sledgehammer," says the flatfoot sergeant. "This man of yours in civvies flattened him."

The guy in the sweater is really over six feet six or so, and wide. He came big, fell hard. You know the old saying.

"He's no man of mine," shouts the River Police non-com, meaning me. "He's a mechanic, so Perkins says."



I counter with a heavy punch.

But I'll bet he's really a gorilla. He says he slugged this big tough."

"If he did, I want him on my squad," says the flatfoot sarge. "I can use a slugger there."

"Not so fast," says the River Policeman. "He may be in civvies now, but he's going to be a River Police Patrolman. What is your name, slugger?"

"His name's Red," says Nosey. "Or maybe I should quit stalling and tell you everything. This is Steve Brixton, and he's already on one police force, so he can't be either a River man or a flatfoot."

I STAND quiet and let them argue. I always enjoy Nosey's backchat.

"He's a Midstate Trooper," explains Nosey finally, "and he has a leave of absence from his State Trooper squad to go and fight a war. He has got another month before he goes back to the States. I brought him along tonight to see how the Thames Police work. I didn't think we'd have any excitement when I started out on the routine assignment you gave me, Sergeant, or I'd have left him home. I wouldn't want no international complications. But we run into a little fuss."

Can you imagine that? A little fuss! What a nerve that Nosey has!

The guy in the white sweater is stirring and groaning.

"Cripes!" the River Police Sergeant says. "What did you hit him with, Trooper? Let me see your hand."

I show him my left. It aint skinned much. When I lift my left, my right arm swings a little, and it hurts. I guess it shows a little on my face, because Nosey looks curious. He spots the trouble right away. He's sharp, that little guy!

"Let me see your right, Red," he demands. Then he gets the whole story. He turns my shoulder to the light and sees the hole in my coat. He finds out what I found out awhile ago. What I thought was a punch that I was riding out was really a slug that didn't go too wild. But you can't keep anything from that guy Nosey.

"Only through the flesh," he says, kind of uninterested. "When are you going to learn to duck, Red?"

The River Police Sergeant is fussing with the guy in the white sweater, putting cuffs on him. "Did you know this is Jorgens?" he asks. "The big shot himself."

Nosey gets mad. "Quit monkeying around with that punk," he snaps. "and take Red to the Police Dock for first aid. I'll take care of Jorgens." That's Nosey all over, cocky as ever, giving orders to his sergeant. "Get out of here, Red. We got a nice little nurse at the dock to baby you."

That's what I like about Nosey; for nerve and backchat I got to take my nut off to that cocky little Limey. He aint afraid of nobody.

The MOON-EYE

Man or horse, you can tell a lot by looking them in the eye.

by Jonathan Brooks

M^{R.} HATHAWAY," said Eddie Hamlin, "that bay horse you call Mr. Edison—the one you've let me work—I think I might like to have him."

Mrs. Philemon D. Hathaway, wife of the big banker-industrialist, looked at Hodge Doolittle, pudgy plant superintendent, as if to ask how a young engineer, just out of the Air Corps and back in a factory, would lay his hands on money. And Doolittle, wagging his head in surprise, wondered what in the world the boy would want with a horse—especially the high-priced kind that brought Hathaway publicity on the sports pages.

"Like him, do you?" asked Hathaway. "I thought you might."

"I've driven him three times, and think I could use him."

"Eddie, you use a horse?" Mrs. Hathaway exclaimed.

"You don't go around driving a horse," Doolittle protested.

"Well, I don't know, Ed," said Hathaway eagerly. "That is, a good horse, well bred, with a lot of speed. I'd hate—"

"What will you take for him?" Eddie came to the point.

"It's not a question of what I'll take—are you making an offer?" Hathaway asked. "I'm not saying I'll sell—certainly won't, to just anybody. But since it's you—" He paused.

"Thousand dollars." "Hm," Hathaway grunted, as his wife gasped. "It would seem, Ed, you're out of touch—all that time in the Army, and the plant. Times have changed, values are up. I wouldn't consider a cent less than two thousand dollars."

Young Hamlin did not bat an eye at the doubled figure. "Of course, it isn't as if he were good enough to be up on the Grand Circuit with the rest of your stable," he said. "If your drivers thought he could go, he wouldn't be standing in the stable."

Mr. Hathaway wondered where this boy learned horse-trading. "But my boy, that's a question of where, and when, as with any race horse," he replied blandly. "No, you don't offer enough, Ed. I've got a lot of money in him."

"But none, out!"

As Hathaway turned his head so that his young opponent might not see him blink at this thrust, Doolittle intervened briskly:

"Look here, Eddie, what'n heck are you up to? How you gonna get anywhere in engineering if you go foolin' with a race-horse? Is that what's on your mind, all the time, around the plant?"

Eddie Hamlin flushed. "The plant hasn't hired all of my mind yet, has it?" he countered. "If my work—"

"No, no, hold on," Doolittle protested. "Your okay, your work's high grade. No dull tool, what I always say! But with your degree, your plant experience and all that work you had in the Air Corps, you oughta be goin' some place."

"But not behind a horse?" Chick Hathaway came out on the porch and interrupted, laughing. "Haven't you found out yet, Doo, that the Lieutenant has a superiority complex?"

"If everybody is going to get on and ride, this is where I came in," Eddie laughed, and rose to pull up a chair for the girl. "Also, where I go out!"

"No hurry. It's comfortable here, for all the July heat," Hathaway objected. He hated to lose a sales prospect. "If you are really in earnest, and I can feel that Mr. Edison is in good hands, I might consider fifteen

hundred. But it would be giving him away!"

"There must be more in this than meets the eye," said Mrs. Hathaway. "Just out of the airplane business, and you want a horse at a fancy price! What is it all about, Eddie Hamlin?"

"That's what I want to know," Doolittle reinforced her.

"Maybe they'll understand it better than I do," Chick added.

"Well, all right, I guess it won't be a secret very long," Eddie agreed. "I hope my work at the plant hasn't suffered, Doo; but I'm all burned up with an idea. Had it in the Air Corps but couldn't find any brass with ears to listen. I—ah—think I know how to supercharge the supercharger."

"My stars in heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Hathaway. "Supercharge the supercharge— But Eddie, this horse isn't a charger. He—ah—trots, doesn't he, Phil?"

"Sometimes—I mean, yes, yes, very fast!" Her husband's face turned red at his blunder. Mr. Edison was one of his bloomers, if the truth must be told.

"No connection, Mrs. Hathaway," Eddie grinned. "That is, for anybody but me. There's quite a problem in supercharging, though, and I think I've got the answer! But it takes money—"

"Then don't go throwing it around on an old horse!"

"Eddie," Chick exclaimed, "it's awfully warm—weren't we going to take a ride?"

Young Hamlin, relieved at the interruption, arose with her. "Yes, of course, Chick, to cool off," he said. "Ah, Mr. Hathaway, a thousand?"

"You win," grunted the older man wryly. "Provided," he added, wondering what the boy had in mind, "that if you wish to sell him, I'll have first refusal!"

Eddie nodded, and followed Chick down the steps. In a moment they rolled down the driveway in an old Jenders coupé with the top down, Chick's curly black hair crinkling in the slight breeze.

Hathaway strained to hear the engine. "Ten years old, if it's a day! Not a bad car, Doo. You can't hear a whisper!"



"We made a good engine, and he nurses it—the kid's good, no dull tool," said Doolittle, finishing a bottle of beer he had been nursing.

"But if he goes off supercharging—" Mrs. Hathaway liked the sound of the word. "It doesn't make sense!"

"Oh, yes, it does, ma'am," Doolittle defended Eddie. "Yuh see, up twenty-five thousand feet, it's mebbe twenty below zero. Air's different, lighter. Engines lose power. Yuh gotta supercharge—only, that aint enough, seems like."

"So the boy goes fooling with a horse—not that I'm not glad to help him out, if I can," said Hathaway, inwardly relieved at being rid of Mr. Edison.

"Mr. Hathaway, if he can do anything with his idea, he can clean up, big!" exclaimed Doolittle. "A million in it, for him! I won't say he can, but I aint sayin' he can't. He'll need money, an engine, and—it'd be great if he's got the answer to all of them newfangled jets and rockets!"

"Maybe," Mrs. Hathaway volunteered timidly, "he is going to supercharge the horse first, and then the engine! But Phil,"—and she turned indignant—"why did you have to unload that horse on him! You didn't pay as much—"

"Why should I sell him a good one?" her husband demanded.

"But all your others are good ones—I heard Eddie say you have the highest-priced collection of horseflesh there is, anywhere!"

"He *did* not," Hathaway snapped. "He said *horsemeat*!"

AN hour later Chick, her black hair setting off the yellow and white of her Red Cross volunteer uniform, sat boylike on the fence beside the mile track at the fair-grounds, far across the sprawling city from home. A wrinkled old darky in overalls leaned beside her, his elbows on the rail. He mumbled softly as both peered up the homestretch into the sunset.

"Knowned his papa, an' his papa," droned Tucky Wiggins. "Bofe had han's. Hoss got any foot a-tall, they git it outa him! Mistuh Edwin—Mistuh Edwa'd. This boy got han's too."

"Here they come," Chick murmured, shading her eyes. They could hear the steady pounding rhythm of hoofs.

"Jus' watch his han's, ma'am," said Tucky. "Yo' think he is holdin', but actually, he pushin' at big hoss home! Jus' see that ol' hoss stretch hisself! Thutty-five feet, ev'ry step he take!"

Chick's heart quickened as a big bay trotter swept past with a rush. If she expected the slender boy reinsman to notice her, she was disappointed, for he took his eyes off the horse's back only for a fleeting glance

*Illustrated by
Manning
De V. Lee*



The judges were adamant, and the former owner of Mr. Edison retreated in bad order. He had played his last card and lost.

at the stopwatch in his right hand. She saw a pleased smile break across his cheek.

"See, ma'am? Han's like them, and hosses like that, an' *some* people fool with machinery!" Old Tucky picked up a blanket, clambered over the fence and shuffled up the track.

"Is Mr. Edison a moon-eye?" Chick asked, following him.

"Wussn't—hunh?" Tucky grunted, suspicious.

"My daddy just sold him to Eddie," she laughed.

"Nevuh yo' mind—jus' ast Mistuh Eddie." Then, as Eddie came jogging his horse down the track Tucky sang out: "Five!"

"Three, I made it," grinned Eddie, swinging off the bike as Tucky took

hold of the horse's bridle. "Sneaked in a fast quarter!"

"Umhmph! Boy, can we go!"

"Maybe we'll do, Tuck. And listen—cool him out slow, an extra ten minutes. Daylight-saving gives us time to work late, but it gets chilly. And Tuck, you jog him five miles *slow* tomorrow afternoon. See you Monday evening," added the boy, while Tuck spread the blanket over the trotter's heaving sides, and let down his head. Mr. Edison snorted his relief.

"I asked Tucky if Mr. Edison is a moon-eye," Chick laughed when they were rolling out of the great park in Eddie's old car.

"And didn't find out a thing?"

"Maybe I did, though!"



"Mistuh Eddie, as shuah as Ah knowed yo' papa, yuh got the key to this hoss."

"Either way, join me in a laugh at my dumbness," he said. "Listen, I know this horse's story. He's trotted all his fields into the ground, and then run away in the stretch. I decided to find out why. Started some research, made a chart—"

"A chart?"

"Good engineering chart—times of day, places, weather—everything. If Edison bumped his nose on the water-bucket, when? In the stall, or out? If he stumbled, where, when? If he shouldered a post, was the sun bright? It was rich—me, an engineer, trying to be a horseman!" He laughed.

"But I don't see—"

"Neither can the horse, coming out of his dark stall into the sun!"

"That's a moon-eye? Where's the joke?"

"On me, for Tucky can't read my chart, much less write on it!"

"So Dad did sell you a blind horse," said Chick ruefully.

"Nope," was the cheerful reply. "Merely going blind."

"But you can't race a blind—"

"One of the great trotters, Rhythmic, was blind. A friend of Granddad, named Geers, raced him."

"Maybe so, but I think Dad—"

"I'm not beefing," Eddie laughed. "I think I know what to do about it. Lay off! But wowie, me and my chart!"

"Oh—well, I'm sorry I said you have a superiority complex!"

"I'll need one. But where for chow? Speaking of horses, I could eat one—at least, a pony!"

THE next Tuesday evening Eddie told Chick he and Tucky were taking Mr. Edison to Connersville next day for a sort of laboratory experiment. "My notion will prove out, or it won't. We're going to race, and see whether we go ahead to campaign for my supercharging stake," he explained.

"Race? Well, I hope you don't break a leg!"

"I've driven many a race, for Dad, when I was a kid," said Eddie. "And I'm in good hands—I've a committee: Mr. Edison, Tucky, and Tuck's little cur pup," he laughed.

"Oh, just like the Army, and the privates advise the generals?" Chick replied. "But wouldn't simple coöperation be better?"

"Right—that's why I'm sleeping at the barn. We coöperate!" . . .

Horse-lovers at the Connersville races were amazed, in the first heat of the 2:08 trot, at the coöperation's success. For Eddie, wearing a grin, but nervous and grim beneath it, drove Mr. Edison out in front of his field and kept him trotting all the way, with no break as they passed the grandstand in either circuit of the half-mile track.

"Not a skip, nevuh no bobble!" Tucky exulted. Eddie said nothing.

Race fans who knew Mr. Edison's history wondered at his transformation, but in the second heat decided nothing had happened. For on this outing, Mr. Edison, leading the pack, bolted and tried to run away in front of the grandstand. Eddie, needing all his strength, whipsawed the big horse down to a virtual walk, got him on his feet again, and trotted him hard to catch the leaders on the second round. Once more, approaching the stand, Edison broke and ran. He was distanced, and dropped from the race.

"Perfect," asserted Eddie cryptically, when Tucky took the horse from him, "—if my arms aren't broken from trying to hold him."

Tucky was more voluble. "Too bad we didn't want to win, Mistuh

Eddie. Gotta hoss 'at will go," he declared.

That night, late, back at the fairgrounds, Eddie left old Tuck with his instructions: "Keep the horse outdoors all you can, Tuck, especially when it's sunny. Put his hay and his bucket by the door, so he'll be looking out. And Tuck, we're going to Cleveland on Monday, to race on Wednesday."

"Yessuh, Mistuh Eddie," mumbled Tuck. And when the boy left, Tuck still muttered to himself. "Han's, Ah said he got; but brains Ah nevuh said nuffin about!"

Late as it was, Eddie Hamlin telephoned Chick as soon as he reached his room. "I couldn't find anything in the paper, Eddie," she complained. "How did it work?"

"To specification," he replied mysteriously. "Just as I wanted it. The horsemen will all know I'm a sucker! I drove him the second heat the way your dad's high-priced drivers did."

"Old superiority complex working," she jeered, but sleepily.

"Sister, we added that up," he said. "I'm smarter than a horse, or the dull tools around me at the plant. Besides, my girl's the snappiest number in the American Red Cross, so why not feel superior?"

"Your girl? Set it to music!"

"Night, sis!"—soltly.

"Luck, Eddie!"—pianissimo.

MR. HATHAWAY had a rough time of it, up there in the judges stand at North Randall before the races. "But I paid the entry fee," he protested. "The boy is goofy. The horse is crazy! He'll run away, kill somebody. I demand that he be barred!" "No, Hathaway," the judge replied firmly. "Mr. Hamlin has paid the starting fee. We cautioned him. He promised to handle the animal. And we think he can."

"But suppose someone gets killed? I tell you—"

"It would still be no skin off your nose. You sold the horse."

The judges were adamant, and the former owner of Mr. Edison retreated to his grandstand box, in bad order. He had played his last card and lost. His pride was spared, for he did not hear the starter offer to bet that old Hathaway would claim half the stake if the kid won! Nobody covered the bet, and that last indignity also missed him!

Sitting there in the box, Mrs. Hathaway felt nervous and ill at ease. Eddie had just driven home a bang-up second in the first heat of the big Stake Trot, the while her husband marveled that Mr. Edison kept his feet right down to the finish. But coming second, she sensed, would not advance Eddie's plans a dime's worth. She sat alone. The crowd was a horsy

throng, loud with good-natured banter. Indeed, that was why she felt lonely, for some of the talk around them had caused Hathaway's face to turn red, and reminded him he had to see somebody somewhere.

"Hi, Mom!" And she breathed relief at Chick's voice. "I saw you from down there on the rail. Thought I'd sit with you."

"Good—but Chick, what are you doing here?"

"Took the day off from the Red Cross, and rode up with Doo," said Chick. "The question is, what are you doing here?"

Unaccountably, her mother giggled. "Your father said he had business. After lunch, when he tried to brush me off—is it?—I stayed with him, and here I am!"

"Daddy? Where is he?"

"Sh! Some of these men were talking about the old Hathaway runaway and—"

"Pop couldn't take it!" Chick laughed. "They saw no runaway."

"No—Eddie almost made it home first. I was so excited!"

"Well, Mother, did you see the boy bring that horse down there?" This was Hathaway's voice, loud, for the benefit of the neighbors. "I always knew the horse had it. And"—he lowered his tone as he sat down—"I've bought some whole-race mutual tickets. Why, Chick, you here?"

"Rode up with Doo, to rally around when Eddie's on the spot," she answered dryly.

"We didn't have any business, though."

The shot told, for her father flushed. His wife put in: "This spot, Chick—will he get off it, if he wins?"

"He needs twenty-five thousand dollars," the girl replied. "Every dime that he has, and all his ambition, is wrapped up in this race."

"He'll get long odds," Hathaway said. "I—er—made a bet on the race—ah—after the first heat. There's heavy betting, with two horses getting the most play, and five others, some. But only one ticket, I think, was sold on Edison before the first heat! If he wins—"

"Mom, we know more about Dad's business," Chick interrupted. "But Pop, there were three win-race tickets."

"Don't tell me you're in this business, too," said her mother.

"With Eddie and Doo. We're all broke if Mr. Edison breaks!" giggled Chick. "One ticket each, for Eddie's project."

"Where's Doo?" her father asked.

"On our side, now."

"And Father will surely join us," said her mother sweetly.

Hathaway's face blazed redder than a driver's neck. "Never mind! I asked, where is Doo?"

"Helping Eddie, and Tuck, and the horse," Chick giggled again. "On the committee. Ed says the odds will be as long as a string!"

"Language," sighed Mrs. Hathaway, "is wonderful."



"I couldn't find anything in the paper, Eddie," she complained. "How did it work?"

And simple, as Hodge Doolittle was proving to Eddie Hamlin at the moment. Words and horses were alike beyond the ken of the chunky superintendent, but he plodded with Eddie behind the sulky to the track gate, watching Tucky shuffle along with one hand on the horse's bridle and the other rubbing Mr. Edison's black nose. Doo spoke.

"You can do it, kid—you and the horse!"

Eddie, knowing Doolittle did not realize he was going out to battle one hundred thousand dollars' worth of trotters and seven of the Grand Circuit's best reinsmen, grinned. His face was tense, but he winked at his boss and partner. Seating himself, he swung his feet into the stirrups on the shafts, and tightened his grip on the reins, only to feel Mr. Edison standing placid. Tucky Wiggins held up a hand, and shuffled back to Eddie's side.

"**M**ISTUH EDDIE," he mumbled, "as shuah as Ah knowed yo' papa, an' his papa, yuh got the key to this hoss! He aint *evah* trotted hisself off his feet. He been afraid, cv' time he's broke. Jus' trot him, and leave 'em chase us home!"

"Thanks, Tuck, that's it," said Eddie very gravely. Then he gave his right hand to the surprised, dignified old swipec, who clasped it only after wiping his own on his overalls. And then Eddie was off down to the head of the stretch, to turn for a warm-up sprint before the second heat. His mind concentrated on a simple, if possible, plan for his honest-going bay horse.

"That boy sho' got han's," muttered Tucky.

"He's no dull tool," said Doo. Speaking different languages, they still understood each other! They watched the boy and his horse.

Forgetting his wager of all his savings, oblivious of superchargers, unmindful of his engineering degree, Eddie Hamlin calculated without his slide-rule. In the first heat, starting from a poor position, he had brought Mr. Edison through the field and set him down only a half-length short of the winner's nose, after a stirring stretch drive.

Now, starting in second place, he felt he had only two horses really to beat. The first-heat winner, a trim sorrel named Gallant Hanover, acting more like a thoroughbred than a trotter, could flash almost running speed in the last eighth. George Murphy, a veteran, reined him at the rail. An old-timer of his father's day, one Johnny Dickerman, was at Eddie's right with a black mare called Myrtle Dear, having finished third when Eddie thrust into their private fight down the stretch, the first heat.

Should he rate with them? Match strides for three quarters, and then—but no.

"They've got to trot my race, not theirs," Eddie told himself, suddenly resolute. "If we can trot it too, we're in!" And to Mr. Edison, wheeling to score for the start, he spoke aloud: "Okay, boy, we're going!"

They swung and straightened alongside the Hanover, which Murphy maneuvered along the rail until, with the field aligned, it seemed they would get away the first time. Then, at precisely the same instant Murphy clucked, and twitched his whip, Eddie tightened his grip and shook up the big bay. Mr. Edison was winging along with the Hanover when Eddie heard the starter's shout: "*Go!*"

"My pole here, boy!" Murphy called out.

"If you can keep it," Eddie grinned, and touched his bay with the whip, lightly. Mr. Edison lengthened and quickened his stride, and away they went! It was well they stretched, for Dickerman, outside with the black mare, had the same idea.

Mr. Edison stepped out briskly and led the way into the first turn. As they reached it, Eddie's head was up even with Hanover's ears and the black mare's nose. He knew Dickerman would pull back when he saw he could not steal the inside route with a quick sprint. And even as he saw the black head receding at his right, he heard his cue from Murphy, at his left.

"He'll only run away again, sonny!" "Watch him!" Eddie exclaimed boldly, and flicked the bay with his whip once more. On the curve, knowing that the trotters flanking him had dropped back to team it side by side, he edged closer to the rail and took a clear lead. "If they want to wait and race in the last eighth, they'll have to wait faster than they like," he told himself—and settled down to ride, hands light but firm in the grips.

Flashing past the quarter-pole, he glanced hastily at the stopwatch in his left hand, and noted twenty-nine seconds. Easing the speed somewhat, into the backstretch, he still felt Hanover and the mare were dropping back slowly. The others strung out behind. He held his lead.

Up in the stand, across the field, loud talk rattled around the bewildered ears of Mrs. Hathaway. One voice said: "It's only the old Hathaway runaway! And he will!"

"Ten gets you twenty he won't," yelled her husband hotly. Indignant, he drew no waver, and waxed more indignant thereby.

On the track, at the finish line with his blanket, Tucky tried to reassure the sweating Doolittle. "He gwine stay right on the ground. He won't beat hisself—they gotta beat him!"

Passing the half-mile, Eddie noted he had been on his way only a fraction over a minute. He knew so much early speed was suicidal—your modern trotters rate along for three quarters, to fly home at blistering speed. He knew the Hanover and Myrtle Dear could sprint that last eighth, and he did not know how fast Mr. Edison—

"Let's go, boy!" he yelled suddenly, swinging into the far turn. He swished his whip over the bay's shoulder, and yelled again, forgetting for the moment that Mr. Edison could not hear him! But the horse stretched until, rounding into the straightaway that had often been his undoing—

"Flatten out, we's a conin'," Tucky screamed far down the track.

No time to sneak a look at his watch now. But Eddie, still driving only with his hands, began to glow. For he heard Murphy—

"We're coming, kid!" And Dickerman—

"Let's go, black mare!"

And the voices were no closer!

He held tight to the rail and felt the good bay lengthen his stride once more in the straightaway. No feeling along cagily, but honest reaching as far as the hoofs will reach, and hard driving, as hard as the powerful hind quarters will drive! Eddie heard the onrush of Hanover and Myrtle Dear, outside him—and the thudding of many hoofs, as the field moved up to challenge.

He caught a glimpse of two heads at his right shoulder, noted they were gaining slowly, and shifted his gaze to Mr. Edison's ears. They were back, flat, frozen. With his hands he felt for any sign of wavering, and feeling none, sat tight and rode, rode hard!

THE eighth-pole brought Hanover to Mr. Edison's shoulder—and Myrtle Dear, their hoofs fluttering with speed, gaining on him—slowly gaining! The roar of the great crowd smote him in the face. Shouts of thousands who had watched, and hundreds who thrill to a beautiful speed battle, together deluged him, like a Niagara of sound.

"Oh, oh!" whispered Chick. Her mother, unable to look away from the horses, did not see that her blasé daughter was knotted up like the handkerchief in her fingers. "Phil, Phil," murmured Mrs. Hathaway. Her husband did not hear. His panorama down over his eyes, he was trying to look away from pending disaster. It always happened. That fool boy—

"Man, oh!" Eddie's heart stood still as they charged headlong into pandemonium. Is this it? But no—those ears are stiff! His bay's stride is split-second rhythm! Yet Hanover and Myrtle Dear edged up, and up. Eddie worked his hands together over the

driving hindquarters, took the reins tightly in his left, and with his right, cut boldly at Edison's right shoulder with his whip. One slash!

And then he grasped the reins quickly with both hands, tightening his grip, and thus, only thus kept the great bay, flying now, from a zooming take-off, from snatching the bike right out from under him! Thus, down to the wire, the uproar more deafening, and as first Myrtle Dear and then the Hanover, despite skillful urging, seemed to slide, seemed to fade, back, and back, until he and the sincere Edison flashed along alone, in the clear—unperturbed by the racket. Under the wire!

He could not hear Murphy or Dickerman, but he might have heard, as his heart pounded the blood into his ears in time with the bay's hoofs pounding the track back into the past,—he might have heard old Tucky in his screaming falsetto:

"Do he stay on 'at ground an' trot 'em into it?"

Eddie eased the horse down, on the turn, and finally jogged back to salute the judges. He blushed as the crowd roared on seeing the time card hung out, but the noise did not bother Mr. Edison, who held up his head proudly until Tucky nuzzled him.

Chick flushed in pride, but her mother slumped exhausted in her chair. "Does he have to do that again?" she whispered. And Philemon D. Hathaway slapped men on the back and asked them fiercely how they liked *that* kind of Hathaway runaway! "And that time—so close to

two minutes you can't whistle the difference!"

Eddie had to do it again, and did, without the whip this time. It was a fraction slower, but just as conclusive, for beaten horses do not charge their conqueror so determinedly a second time.

HATHAWAY, under his wife's urging, gave a dinner party. And Chick proposed a toast: "Here's to the old superiority complex!"

"And supercharging!" Doolittle added. "I'm in, with the thousand dollars I got for my twenty-five!"

"And I, with my two thousand," said Chick.

Hathaway almost choked on a sip of wine. "Ed, you had five hundred dollars up, and collected at forty to one?" he quavered. "My horse—". And he did choke.

"Take him," said Eddie. "Tuck's learned how to dress him."

"What's the trick, Ed—give!" Doolittle ordered.

"He's slowly going blind, and no wonder. We take him out of a dark stall into the sun—some drivers wear goggles, and they're not reined up looking right into the sun, to protect their eyes—"

"They *have* to be reined up—the horses," Chick told her mother.

"Couldn't they wear bifocals—the horses?" asked Mrs. Hathaway.

Eddie had to ignore that idea. "So, I figured he ran away in the stretch because the crowd's roaring scared him—he couldn't see what made the racket. So we put cotton in his ears!"

"And drove him a million!" Doo exclaimed.

"But the rules—look—" Hathaway was dumfounded.

"We told the judges, before the race," Chick spoke up.

"Let's start supercharging," Doolittle suggested. "I'll bet I can wangle an engine—"

"I'll need a cold-storage plant," Eddie began, light in his eyes.

"Take your ideas to Jenders," said Mr. Hathaway. "They've got the plant, the men, the money."

"They'd have my idea, too."

"Well, then, I've got a cold-storage plant you can rent—"

"Rent? Use!" snapped his wife. "That's in my name, Phil!"

"Yes, Mother," he said meekly—and gave up.

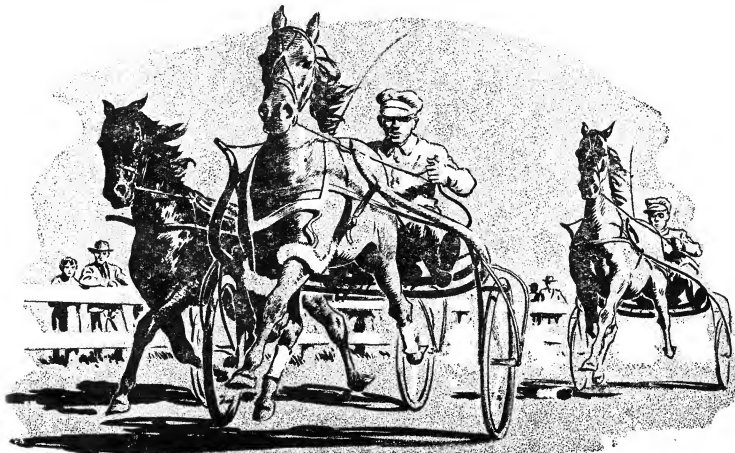
Eddie drove Chick in her coupé, going home, and they followed sedately along behind Doolittle, driving Ed's old Jenders which towed Tucky and Mr. Edison in their little trailer. Around a curve, Chick said she was sorry she teased him about the superiority complex.

"It's okay, sis," said Eddie, easing over on the shoulder when they reached a straightaway. "You see, when a guy is flat, and in the presence of so much and so lovely, he has to put up a front."

"Not if he's got a back, and insides," Chick protested.

"Chick—I've never had the nerve—but, isn't this the way we feel?" he asked. "From this time, now and on?"

"From this time, now and on!" she whispered. . . . Presently they drove on.





The CHAMP'S LAST

THE citizens of Midburgh exercised their hallowed right of the ballot, and Pat Hafey became Mayor. A whimsical song about a million pounds of coffee in Brazil lingered through a long season despite radio, and Mary Carson Boulder, wife of the middle-weight champion of the world, announced without coyness that she was to be a mother. Mrs. Sue Hafey, a lovely lady with two of her own, came rushing with advice and found the champion almost unbearably proud.

Sue Hafey said: "It's not *all* your baby, you know—when it comes. I had the same trouble with Pat when we had Sue, Jr."

"I know, I know," said Willy. He was late for work at the Champion Cab Co., where he was taking over for a bewildered and protesting Mary. "Take care of her, will you? She's got to have—to be—taken care of." He rushed off to the office and his brother-

in-law Happy, who had not heard the amazing news.

Midburgh had lost three of its less worthy citizens—George Miner, the crooked politician and promoter; Lou Farese, a thug and fight-manager; John Carraway, son of the leading banker, and a jerk. The taxi business was flourishing as the new year rolled in and a couple of limousines became available, and Mr. Welsback thought there might be some new hacks available in the coming season. Of course the cost of living was terrific, and newly married couples in houses of generous proportions could scarcely afford to exist, Willy Boulder thought. He was thirty-one; he was middle champ; he had a going business—in partnership with Happy Carson; and at the end of each week he had not a quarter to lay aside. The economics of America had slipped somewhere along the line, and Government was fumbling on its own five-yard line.

Some people said if Government got out of business altogether, things would be better; but Willy had never known a time when Government was not sticking its nose into business, so he had no opinion on that score.

He went into the office of the Champion Cab Co. and picked up the morning newspaper. He had not boxed for almost a year, but he could not break himself of the old habit of unfolding the paper at the sports page first.

There was an AP boxing story featured. He saw the name "Kayo Dollar," and eagerly read the by-lined yarn from New York. A famed boxing writer had dipped his type-writer in a sea of superlatives and let it flow.

"... Since Ketchel, and I repeat, since the immortal Stanley Ketchel, there has never been such a middle-weight hitter as Kayo Patsy Dollar. Since Dempsey there has never been



Illustrated by John McDermott

"I heard three men talking about Willy Boulder. Vicious men—his enemies."

STAND

such an intense ring personality. When the lean Kayo begins to sweat and comes out in that weaving, bobbing, slashing attack of his, no other living middleweight can hope to stand against him.

"Where, then, is his crown? Willy Boulder, the reigning king of middles, is thirty-one and idle. When will he allow Dollar a chance at the throne? It is rumored that Willy is willing to pass the crown to his former protégé, which would be an excellent idea in the interest of Boulder's health."

WILLY growled: "The hell you say! Why, I taught that punk all he knows."

Happy Carson was leaning in the doorway, grinning. He said: "Yeah, when you had it, pal. The kid's got good. I seen him massacre Meyer last month when I was in New York!"

"Well, I knocked Augie Meyer out last year," snapped Willy. "What

makes everybody think Kayo can beat me so easy? A year ago he was a welter, and not the champ, either."

"You outgrew the division before you were champ, too," Happy said genially. "Hell, Willy, you go back to Barney Ross' day—you know that?"

"I was sixteen when I began," Willy said angrily. Then he shook his head as though dispelling a cloud, and murmured: "Gee, I almost forgot. Imagine that. I almost forgot!"

"I hope you didn't forget we need some parts for the hacks, and that the mechanics want more dough and we got to give it to 'em, what with groceries costin' like they do."

Willy said: "I forgot to tell you I am going to have a baby."

Happy said: "All alone? That'll be quite a stunt. Can I watch?"

Willy said with dignity: "I see nothing funny about it. Mary is going to stay at home, and I'll be down here every day in her place."

Willy Boulder winds up his boxing career in a blaze of excitement.

by **JOEL REEVE**

Happy's freckled face grew serious. "Oh, no! Not that. Look, pal, hire a bookkeeper, you hear? I know a G.I. who will do. And you sort of—uh—overlook things. I mean oversee things. But don't try to handle them details like Mary does. I tried it once. Headaches, pal, migraines."

Willy said: "I hope I can hold down a job my wife has done for years."

Happy said lugubriously: "That's what you *hope*. Pal, I been knowin' you since you was a prelin boy. You ain't got but one fault: You get it in your head you oughta be able to do somethin'—you think right away you can do it."

Willy said: "You handle the shop, my friend. I'll take over here."

He tried it, too. A month went by; and Happy, trying to keep an eye on things, went to Mary Boulder, his sister, but privately, so that Willy should not know. Mary, sighing, agreed that something should be done.

Mary went to Sue, who took her to the new, busy Mayor. Pat Hafey had lost all of his blond hair, and wore the worried expression of a pink bulldog, but he was always ready to listen to the wife he loved—and especially about Willy Boulder, whom he had managed to a world title before his political advent had taken him from pugilism. When the women had finished, he said: "Willy has no right down there in the cab company office. Of course he would mess things up. He's the softest touch in the country

... Look, girls, I have got to give up all connection with my gymnasium. I have a lad who runs the books, and all it needs is a personality to keep it going. I also have some good fighters—Hose, Bolero and some others. Let me see what I can do with Willy."

PAT got Willy in his office, where Willy was uncomfortable, staring at the leather furniture, the over-stuffed outer room with its political appointees, the mass of detail under the paperweights. Willy said: "You'll go broke on this stupid job, Pat. What you ever want to be mayor for?"

"I've thrown out a hundred crooks, including the Chief of Police," said Pat. "There'll be more later."

"If the ones you put in don't turn out crooked," mooned Willy.

"You're a cynic," said Pat, grinning the old grin. "Say, can you take over the gym and my stable? I've got to get out—can't handle it. I'll take back a mortgage; you own the works."

One paused to stop a passing messenger boy and scribble a note on his pad. Then the two were at the portal where Mary Boulder waited.

Willy said, shocked: "Now wait, Pat. This politicking is okay for fun. But boxing is your business—your life. You got your wad in the gym."

Hafey said: "No, Willy. I'm going up, to the Legislature, next term. And I bought into a couple of things with my spare cash. . . . No, I must get out of the fight business. Will you give me fifty thousand for the works?"

Willy said: "Pat, I have not got fifty thousand cents. The cab business—"

"A mortgage," said Pat Hafey. "For the entire amount."

"It's worth twice that," said Willy. "I'll give you a hundred grand for it. Gee, Pat."

The Mayor of Midburgh said softly: "G'wan, Willy. You built it for me. You were my boy. Let me make part of it a present to the baby Mary's goin' to have for you. I'll draw it up—fifty thousand and twenty years to pay. It'll take care of itself that way, Willy. And leave you some income. The gym pays off. . . . And also, don't forget we sold Kayo to Rack Nebo for fifty thousand, and he was your discovery."

Willy said: "Old Rack's bringing him along. . . . Say, Pat—"

Hafey touched the morning paper with his hand. He said: "Don't pay any attention to those stories, Willy boy. The kid couldn't lick one side of you."

"In my prime, huh? That's what you mean," Willy did not look at his old manager.

"Right now," said Pat heartily, jabbing a fast one into Willy's ribs as he came out of his chair. "You've still got it—and you're going to keep it. You'll be a papa soon. Responsibilities, huh, pal? I'll have that mortgage and the deeds ready tomorrow. And Willy—don't fritter away time at the cab company. That's peanuts and routine; you can hire a kid to do it."

"Sure, Pat, you're right," said Willy. "Frankly, I haven't been happy there. Don't see how Mary ever stood it." He went out into the winter air of Midburgh, turning up his coat collar. He walked down Main Avenue and around the corner and stared across the street at the building which would now be his.

There were smart shops on the main floor; and above, the Downtown Gymnasium was not only a fighter's training-quarters unlike any other in the country, spic and span and modern, but the headquarters for the real sporting men of town, and a place where business men came regularly for treatments and exercise. Willy thought of some changes: He would bring Boo Dorengo, ex-fighter, from



the cab company to teach boxing and stuff. Kid Atkins, his old colored sparmate, and uncrowned welter king until his retirement last year, could cater from his successful restaurant downstairs when refreshments were needed. He had ideas, Willy did. This would be a social center as well as a fighter's paradise.

His old friend Bo Martini, racketeer turned boniface at a roadhouse outside Midburgh, came down out of the gym. The swarthy, lean face cracked in a broad smile as Bo said: "My leetlest brother wanted to be a boxer. He just got creamed. I'll have him back by tomorrow, carryin' a tray. Seven brothers! Responsibilities I got!" "Responsibilities? Ha-ha!" Willy laughed scornfully, pridefully. "Pal, listen awhile." He had lunch with Bo, and they talked of old times.

They talked of the story in the morning paper, too. When they were parting, Bo said: "Bambinos are fine. You will have a fine baby. But don't think of that jerky newspaper story, chum. Get hep to yourself. Stay out o' the ring."

Willy said: "You think I'm crazy?" He went upstairs. It was no use returning to the cab company. He called Happy, and told that delighted young man to hire his G.I. book-keeper.

He undressed, got at the light bag, then the heavy bag. A promising local welter stared at him longingly. Willy said: "C'mon, kid, I'll go a couple rounds with you. Gettin' fat."

"Hal!" said the boy. "Fat! Gee, champ, but you're wonderful. Who'd bother with a punk like me 'ceptin' only you? Gee, champ, you're tops!"

THE punks meant it, too; the kids he treated so well, the old-timers who tapped him regularly for cigarette and cake money. It was his world; he loved it. He was not successful in making the gym a social center, but he made it the sports center of Midstate.

Of course this cost money. He was very generous. Charley Hose and the other fighters brought a decent, small percentage of their purses home to him, but he sort of hated to take that. He had to, but he never enjoyed it.



They wanted Hose to fight Kayo Dollar in an over-the-weight match, but the light-heavy king informed Willy that he wished to evade it. Willy made up a story, and Charley went to the West Coast for a while, but it rankled. . . .

Still life went along smoothly, Mary bore her pregnancy well, and although there was no cash, the mortgage was slowly paid. Willy never got used to the mortgage. It was a debt, and he hated debts. But times were strange—plenty of money, and plenty of places to put it. Willy was confused but happy.

Then something went wrong.

It came through Sue Hafey to Mary, and thence to Willy. One of Pat Hafey's ventures had failed. His income was cut in half. As mayor he lost money, because he was that kind of politician. He believed in honest government and had practised what he preached. He needed outside income to exist. All mayors do, and most know where to get it; but Pat just tightened his belt, said nothing. Sue, being human and female, had to talk.

Willy was in New York on business for Bud Bolero, a Latin lightweight of some competence. The new matchmaker for the Garden, a man named Solly Bain, a lean, sharp little fellow far above the average Jacobs Beach denizen in education, ethics and intelligence, saw him after he received the letter and said: "Bad news, Willy? Not your wife, I hope?"

Willy said: "No, Mary's fine. . . . It's just business."

The sharp matchmaker said: "Isn't it awful?" His eyes were on Willy's long face; his fingers tapped the desk.

Willy said: "We keep losing ground . . . Oh, well, I shouldn't beef. How about fifteen per cent for us, and we'll give you two fights if we win? Bolero'll draw, once he gets that windmill style on display for the fans."

Bain said off-handedly: "Okay. . . . Of course you know that if you need some quick money any time, you can have it."

"Who, me?" Willy made his face serene, innocent.

"Kayo has beaten everyone anywhere near his weight. We'll have to

send him against heavies," said Bain dryly. "We could pack the ball park in the summer and draw the biggest gate small men ever drew. A half million, perhaps. Maybe more. Kayo has got them, with that colorful fretfulness of his, and the power of those short hooks. He's another Dempsey, smaller, but with the color." He did not press Willy, he let it lie there, between them. He was a very shrewd little man.

Willy said: "I'm thirty-one. . . . I intend to pass the title to Kayo this year. I'm through, Solly."

"You look good to me," shrugged Bain. "It's a shame these dynasties overlap. Like Dempsey was gone in the legs when he fought Tunney, and Walker was tops when he got too heavy for the middles. . . . People keep wondering about you and Dollar. You found him overseas or something, didn't you?"

"In that war everyone is trying so hard to forget," nodded Willy. "He is a great boy. Rack Nebo is a great manager. I'm a great old man, they tell me."

"Runyon doesn't think so. Runyon says you can whip him," Bain said. "Parker thinks so, too, and Williams."

"Old-timers, ain't they?" Willy grinned. "All the old-timers think the old boys are best."

Bain lifted his hands. "Oh, I didn't think you wanted any more of it. God knows it's a brutal business."

Willy said in a flat voice: "Brutal? Sure. . . . Will you give me twenty per cent and pay my income tax?"

Bain gulped. He sat back on his chair. He began to sputter a little.

Willy said, thrusting out his chin: "Take it or leave it, and don't say you couldn't make the match. This is your chance. Twenty per cent and the tax."

Bain said faintly: "It's too much. . . . I—"

"You started conning me," Willy reminded him. "I didn't ask for it. You were right—I want the dough."

Bain recovered himself. He drew out a contract and said: "You'll sign again for the papers. But this'll bind it." He wrote in "twenty per cent" and made a notation about the income tax. The agreement had been drawn between Patsy Kayo Dollar and Willy Boulder, the names all typed in. Solly Bain had been ready.

THE three ill-assorted men met in a midtown tavern. George Miner still dominated them in their exile, a big pink man with heavy jowls. Lou Farese was a ferret-glowering, evil. John Carraway, scion of wealth, graduate B.S. of Yale, was the youngest, and hated Willy Boulder the most.

George Miner had once been a strong man, ruler of Midburgh. He had seen his power decline as the

fortunes of Pat Haley increased; he had finally been forced to leave his native State—with considerable fortune—and find new climes. Broadway suited him. If he could not be a large frog in Midburgh, he preferred anonymity in Gotham. He said: "We are agreed that Boulder will probably be beaten by his own ex-protégé. That is pleasant to contemplate. However—there is nothing certain about it. Boulder is a resourceful man. I have great respect for Boulder."

"Ah!h, Haley made 'im, an' Haley ain't in this pitcher," snarled Lou Farese. It was impossible for the feral man to speak of Haley or Boulder in decent accents. He had been a light manager, a hanger-on, manager of the Ace High Cab Co. until his dishonesty made Midburgh too hot for him.

John Carraway said restlessly: "All I know is, I should like to see Boulder destroyed. Ruined. Beaten and wrecked. It is a perfectly cold, intellectual desire of mine." Carraway had taken to hard liquor and late hours. His eyes rested broodingly on a flashy woman in the next booth. She seemed vaguely familiar, but she did not respond to his glance of invitation. He scowled, and he was not young enough for his crew haircut, nor attractive enough to wear the loose tweed suiting.

George Miner said: "My idea is to use my knowledge of Boulder to make a profit. These events occur seldom in a man's lifetime—when he has complete knowledge. I knew the boy when he was seventeen and a prelin fighter. Haley almost went crooked for us, you remember, Lou?"

"In the bag for Dolan," Farese nodded tersely. "He crossed us. He took Boulder out o' town an' made 'im champ."

Miner said: "That is the easy way of believing. Boulder learned much—from Haley and everyone else. He has one fault, one heel of Achilles in his make-up. He is, gentlemen, a soft touch for a hard-luck story."

"Yair, he is," agreed Lou. "He's always wisin' up chumps an' givin' the suckers an even break. He's a born Pollyannar."

THE flashy woman had curves like a big-league hurler in mid-August. George Miner eyed her, said softly to his companions: "Let us repair to my apartment. This is a private matter."

The three men moved out of the tavern. A tall young man with his hat pulled down and his collar turned up slid into the booth with the woman. She said: "Darling, I just heard the damndest thing. . . . Three men talking about Willy Boulder. Vicious men—his enemies. They almost unfolded a plot. It was like a lousy B picture written by a studio hack and directed by an ex-bootblack."

The young man removed his hat and revealed one of the best-known physiognomies in America. He was Jim Ewart, star of the cinema. He said: "Did you get their names or anything? I swear, Flo, you do get into things."

She said placidly: "One of them must have been a Yale. He talked a little like you and wore an unbecoming crew cut."

Ewart winced. He said: "We'll have a drink and call Willy. . . . Haven't seen him since '39—gosh, before the war! You were working then, and going good. Why, Willy stood up with me when we were married."

Florrie Grey Ewart said: "Now he's married. . . . Ain't life hell? I'll have a double Scotch and a telephone. Willy's back in Midburgh, and that nice Mary is expecting a baby. . . . I envy her too much. But I don't envy her husband, darling."

IT was the strangest thing, that he did not respond to the old training régime, Willy found. The runs over the hills around Midburgh taxed his wind and left him weary. He had months to get into shape, so he cut them out.

He worked over his timing. In the gym he found hosts of young fellows willing and anxious to spar with him. Of course not many of them were any good, and Charley Hose was enjoying Hollywood, and Bolero was touring the South with Boo Dorengo handling his corner. But Willy sweated it out in the ring against the local boys.

In New York, Kayo Dollar kayaced a light heavy and a budding heavy. He was twenty, and his condition was a matter of course. He was a tall, lean, natural middleweight who never would put on much weight.

Willy boiled off the pounds. When he hit 165, he began to slow down, but somehow or other the weight continued to slough off. It was alarming, at first. But he seemed to stay strong, and at 155 he began to hold his own. He continued to box, and the weeks went by.

Pat Haley was all over Midstate, making political contacts, building fences, spending more money than he could afford. Business was marking time this year, pending the crack-up of outmoded OPA and other restraints. The stock market fluctuated, but the trend was bearish, and all business suffered. Willy thought grimly of his large purse, and how he could pay off Pat Haley after the fight.

Mary only said to him: "Willy, I know you have to make this fight. It is a thing you must do. I hope you don't get hurt, and I don't mean by the fists of Patsy Dollar, because you have been hit by fists before, and the hurt goes away. I'm thinking about inside you, Willy."

He held her gently and said: "You're my good Mary."

"I understand you," she said. "You must do certain things, and sometimes you are wrong, but your heart is right. I wish you had Pat now."

He said: "The Mayor? I need him like I need another hole in my head. I got to go to New York to finish the training, because the Commission insists. I want you there, but I know you can't come with me. Take care of yourself, Mary, please take care. I love you so!"

He went to New York. He was stark alone, getting off the plane. Kid Atkins was busy with the restaurant full of fried chicken. The others had not returned from their trips.

He carried his own bag to the limousine, but a hand reached out and took it. He stared into the lean, lined features of Rack Nebo. Patsy Kayo Dollar grinned at the elbow of his present manager. There was a big, hired car with a chauffeur. Solly Bain beckoned, calling: "We heard you wouldn't have your gang. Come in with us."

It was swell. It was a grand gesture, and he appreciated it. He saw how keen was Kayo Dollar, and yet respectful too, toward the man who had picked him up in the Army and carried him home to Midburgh to start him to the heights in pugilism. Rack Nebo was grateful too, for the tough, slightly crooked old manager had been out of the big chips when Willy had sold him, on credit, the contract of the boy who was to succeed him as champion. They rode in on Queens Boulevard, and Willy said: "I'm in swell shape, and everything is fine. Pat will probably be Governor. The people are ready for a square guy with brains. If he could deal with guys like Solly and come out alive, he can be President, that's for sure."

"He taught Willy that twenty-percent stuff," Rack confided to Solly. He had not outgrown his reluctance to address a prizefighter directly, even with Willy, it seemed, for he spoke obliquely. "Ha? A smart guy, ha? Leavin' us the dregs. Gotta knock him off to make a dime. Gotta take the title to get even."

"That's fight business," said Willy cheerfully. He said to Kayo: "Bo Martin's sister says you have forgotten her. She said not to give you a message. She was pretty sore."

"Holy gee!" said the youth. "I owe her a letter since Tuesday."

"You can't neglect fine young girls like that," Willy admonished him. "Three days! You're impossible."

They were pleasantly gay, with scarcely any undercurrent of feeling, riding the long road into Manhattan. They dropped Willy at his hotel, and it was summertime, and the night came on balmy and fair. He went up

to his room and called a number. He got the connection and said: "Is this Joe Lacey, the well-known Broadway cop and pay-off man?"

A hard voice said: "I can beat the cop off anybody calls me that."

Willy said: "I give up. . . . Take me, Officer. This is Boulder."

"Why, you old son," said the voice, booming. "What's cookin'? You gonna lay this punk kid away, Champ?"

Willy said: "Who knows? I want you to check on some parties: George Mincer, remember him? Farese, his gunsel. And John Carraway, a fugitive from Yale and Midburgh."

Lacey said: "Like that, huh?"

"Flo Ewart and Jim called me," said Willy. "Months ago. It looks like some dizzy scheme to beat me for sure, before I go into the ring."

There was a small pause. Then Lacey said: "I seen this boy go. He is very good, Champ."

"I ought to know," said Willy.

"I get the underground you are taking twenty and the tax," said Lacey. "I figure you are making this fight because your wife is infanticipating."

Willy said, "You ought to quit reading those Broadway columns."

Lacey said: "Okay, Champ. I'm on your side. I'll check these characters."

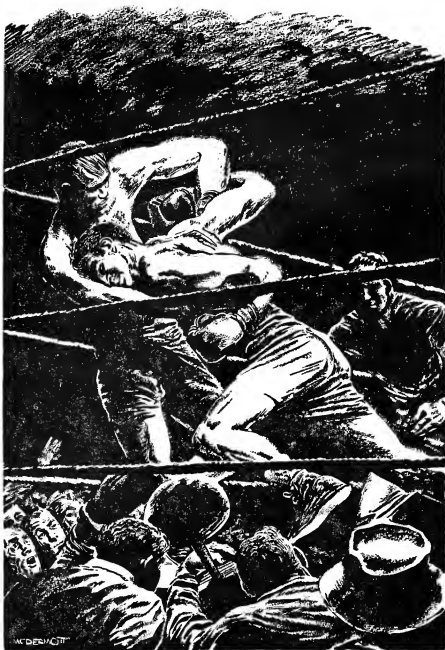
Willy stretched out on the bed. He would bathe, change, eat supper. He would go to a show—a picture, perhaps, since he had no tickets. Alone.

The middleweight champion of the world—alone.

Well, it was better than having a crowd of sycophants around, a bunch of yes-men. He could gather a bunch like that by walking into Dempsey's or any other midtown spot where the sports hung out. He dozed, relaxing.

BUILD-UP for the bout was tremendous. Boxing was in vogue during the immediate years after the war, and the color and drive and above all the terrific punching-power of Kayo Dollar had caught the imagination of the populace. A crowd of fans formed a club, labeled "The Kayo Dollar Marching and Chowder Association," and organized for cheers in unison, buying a block of one thousand ten-dollar seats—not more than a half mile from the ring.

There was no doubt about the gate nor his share in it; and Willy Boulder should have been at peace with the world. If he lost, he was bowing out to youth; he had fought the good fight for years; he was entitled to retire gracefully to leave the ground to the victor, a public hero, a boy Boulder himself had brought into the pugilistic picture. There would be enough money in the kitty to soothe whatever wounds he, an experienced bruiser, would receive in the last defense of his title. He should have been grateful to **Bain** and the great American public.



Kayo leaned back fiercely, trying to pin the champ. Willy did a sidestep.

He could, a cynical reporter hinted, even go so far as to take one. This fight suggested that better men had chosen this way out, pointing to the Conn-Louis fight, in which the challenger knew he was whipped in the first round, and did little to evade the final debacle when the great heavy champ was ready.

But Willy Boulder was not happy. Nor was he willing to admit that Dollar was a better man in any way, shape or form—or that there was a better man in the light heavy or middle ranks in modern ring circles. He came down to the night of the bout in the frame of mind which made the eating of nails a matter of mere chewing and swallowing without effort on Willy's part.

He sat in the hotel room. There was a knock on the door. He barked, "Come in, *come in!*" expecting the

hired seconds he had asked to stop by for him.

Bo Martini said mildly: "You gotta holler at your friends? What's the big beef, kid? Look who's here."

It was the black and grinning face of Kid Atkins. He was rubbing his hands together, rolling the whites of his eyes, smirking at Willy. "Yo' sure look sharp, Willy. I done tol' Lulu May, I tol' her mah boy would condition hisself all right; he on'y needed me to be inna corner. I tol' her neveh mind the chicken sho'tage an' the ham sho'tage; I tol' her me an' Willy bring home de bacon! Yuk-yuk-yuk!"

Bo Martini said: "Are they laying odds! Them suckers are strictly from Dixie this time, kid. I just took fours."

Willy regained his power of speech. He said: "Uh—I didn't think you could make it, Kid. Had some boys hired—"

Atkins stared. "Why, Willy, you knowed I'd make it." His voice was softly reproaching. "I ain't much 't write nor telegram nor nothin'. Me and Lulu May's been awful busy tryin' 't run the joint—"

Willy said hastily: "Oh, sure, but you know how it is. . . . This is just another fight."

The silence became a bit heavy. The hired seconds came, and Willy sent them away. He would work with only Kid Atkins in his corner—the way they had done in the sticks many a time when Pat was out in front, getting bouts on the road ahead. . . . The Kid and Pat were the best handers in the business. Pat Haley, Mayor of Midburgh—sometime Governor of Midstate, a handsome, determined man of forty-seven, honest, clever, the idol of the voters—a man who had attained dignity with his strength, and whose courage had never been in question, a man of the people, for the people.

Willy sighed. He could take part of this dough and pay off the mortgage. He could buy some cabs. Then he could buy that education-lund policy for the kid—and have enough left over to get a new car for Mary.

THE phone rang, and Bo Martini answered it. He said: "This is Martini. . . . Who? . . . Why, you vella dog, don't give me no mala-keey—" He turned and snapped at Willy: "It's that copper, the jerk. That Lacey. What you want mess wit' him for, the crumb bun?"

Willy took the phone, and Lacey spluttered: "Hey, you don't want that racketeerin' crook around ya. What's the idea?"

Willy said: "Bo's no racketeer, he's a roadhouse owner—not in this State, either. What about my friends?"

Lacey said: "Miner and Farese are bettin' their shirts on Dollar, and hangin' around with a bad crowd. But this other gee, this Cartaway, he's sick or somp'n. I don't make him one of them—at least no more. If them other two try anything at all, pal, I'll be on their tails. I'll mow 'em down. I bet a yard on ya. Got three?"

Willy said: "I hope you win, pal. You decided I'm not taking."

Lacey said sturdily: "You ain't no geezer, and you ain't got a dive in you."

Willy said: "Thanks, pal. I'll see you." He hung up. He was puzzled. Florrie Grey had been emphatic. Time had gone by since then, but she had faithfully detailed the conversation she had overheard in the restaurant, and it did not seem possible that George Miner had not hatched a scheme to make Willy lose the fight.

He thought of the seconds he had so carelessly hired. They had seemed quite disappointed not to work—although he had paid them, of course. Could Miner have bribed them to slip

him a Mickey or something? Or was there something still in the wood, he wondered.

Bo Martini was saying: "There ain't goin' to be no funny work, see?" He tapped a slight bulge under his well-fitted sports jacket. On Broadway, Bo had been a double-breasted-suit man, but he belonged to the country club in Midburgh. They had changed a lot since Willy set up pins in the Nonpareil Bowling Alley, and Bo had been hip-deep in the rackets.

The phone rang several times and telegrams were read off: From Happy, who couldn't get away. From men around Midburgh. From Hollywood—a dozen. Then it was Jim Ewart on, and Willy talked to him. The picture star said he and Florrie had flown their own plane in, and would Willy see them after the bout? Willy said he would.

The excitement was piling up. Inside, Willy felt his stomach churning, and that was an old sensation. He never ate dinner before a bout, and now he began to shake a little. He would be calm as ice in the ring, but now he had the jitters.

Kid Atkins said softly: "Us go, now." "Sure," said Bo. "I got a cab waitin'." He was nervous, looking at the now mute telephone. There had been no word from Sue or Pat Haley—nor from Mary.

Willy bit his lip. He lingered, staring at his strap watch. The empty feeling got worse. He grabbed a small bag containing robe, rights and shoes, and said: "The hell with it! Let's go."

He did not need a message, really, because he knew their faith was strong. Not faith that he would win, but faith in his integrity, his inner strength to accept victory or defeat. Nothing else counted, he told himself.

It was just that trained line, he was childish, and little things upset him. At thirty-one, he told himself sternly. He was a man and above childish things. But there was a hurt that they had not wired. Sue always wired. Mary—Mary was bearing his child, and maybe she was ill or something.

That thought bore down on him and he stopped, ready to go back to the room and put in a call to Midburgh. But he could not do that and worry her—he had never been one to call, always taking his bouts in his stride. Just another light, he had told Martini, knowing that he lied in his throat.

Bo, thoughtful always, had the cab parked with the flag down. They got in and roared toward the Bronx. The lights on Broadway were dazzling, and the few moments in the Park were peaceful. Then they were drumming uptown, nearer and nearer the ball park; and Willy Boulder, middleweight champion, was coming close to his predicted Waterloo. He felt it;

he knew the power and speed and skill of the challenger, his own boy, the kid who had carried him under fire to a place of safety, and who had been protected by Willy during his Army campaigns. He himself had said that Kayo Dollar was the champion of middleweights; he had meant to bestow the symbolical belt upon his successor without battle.

It was the money, he told himself, and knew he lied again. It was vanity. The cab bounced along. Bo and the Kid were wrapped in their own thoughts. It was the ingrown inability of a champion to quit without a struggle. It was the thing that had made him a champion, Willy thought, now betraying him into debacle.

Well, he could take it, he hoped. He had, he faced squarely now, almost no chance of winning. Four to one—the bettors knew their stuff. He was on the short end, and he belonged there. He rubbed a thumb along his slightly flattened nose, an old gesture. There would be gloves laid against that nose tonight.

They got out and slid through the pass gate, and went to the dressing-room under the grandstand. Bo opened the door and stood aside. Willy walked in, paused and blinked.

Mary got up off a chair and said: "Surprise!" Sue beamed upon him.

Willy put his arm around Mary, but his stare was past her, to the man with the slight paunch, the balding man in the T-shirt and gray trousers and soft shoes. Willy said: "Pat, you shouldn't. You're a big man now, Pat. Prize-fighting—that is not for a Governor-to-be, Pat." He choked so he could scarcely talk. He could not take his eyes from the round, serious face of his manager and friend.

Mary said in his ear: "You didn't ask us to come, Willy. You never would. So we had to. I'm going to wait right in here, Willy. I'm not coming out. It wouldn't be—right. I'll wait here, and when you come back it will be fine. You'll try to win—and you'll need me if you lose. I know what it means, darling—your life, everything—that title—"

HE could not speak then. The butterflies ceased performing in his stomach. He sat on a stool and talked easily with them. He looked at the time, got up and went into the showers and undressed. He came out, and Pat was ready with the bandages. Pat's hands were never surer nor steadier. Kid Atkins was arranging the collodion, the gauze, the styptic pencil, the cotton, the wooden sticks. It was an old, old routine, and Willy grinned at Mary, who had never seen it before.

He said: "You take it easy, baby. I'll be right back."

Sue went to her ringside seat with Bo Martini. Mary had a book, and

they fixed a light, and she swore she would be all right. Willy kissed her tenderly and touched her bright auburn hair with his bandaged hand. Then it was time to go down to the light-shrouded ring over second base.

Two male figures detached themselves from behind a corner of the dressing-room wall and began crowding toward the door Willy and his seconds had just quitted. One paused to stop a passing messenger boy and scribble a note on his pad. Then the two were at the portal where Mary Boulder waited within.

The din was terrific. Willy hauled at the ropes through old habit, and peered down at Pat and Kid Atkins.

ACROSS the ring the nervous, lean, brown Kayo almost shook himself apart, his feet shuffling, his hands moving in short arcs, and his face lined and suffering, it seemed, in his anxiety to begin the fray.

The old-timers muttered: "Dempsey all over again. A killer. But Willy's got the science." They knew as they spoke they were whistling past a graveyard. . . .

The bell. The rush. The feet coming on the canvas, slithering, without pause; no nonsense about this. The challenger, flaming with the strength and inordinate passion of his will to win, slammed those little hooks, those paralyzing twelve-inch Dempsey hooks, his arms like flails, his gloves curling to the body, then switching savagely to the head.

Willy timed the rhythm of the punches. He took half a dozen before he caught the beat of Dollar's attack. One side of his face assumed proportions equal to half a grapefruit. His nose bled a little, and there were red spots on the flesh over his ribs.

But his left was going in, turning the shoulder of the younger man. His right hand was coming across in the counter. He landed, and Kayo Dollar went back on his heels for a split instant, and again Willy clouted him, negligently, as he moved outside the range of the fury of renewed attack. Another boy, catching the right cross Willy had landed, would have been amazed, deflated, forced to caution.

To hit Kayo Patsy Dollar was to be hit in return. Like a fighting Fury, he came in and under, weaving, bobbing, throwing those terrible short hooks. Willy had to gauge them in advance, match them with elbows, forearms, small evasions by twisting his torso, maintaining the terrain by deft maneuverings, never retreating at top speed, but always making the boy miss as often as possible, making him look bad on the misses. A thud-

ding right almost tore out Willy's middle at the bell, and he did a nimble step to convince the judges that it had not hurt a bit, even as his insides crawled in abject pain.

Pat said: "He slugged you, kid."

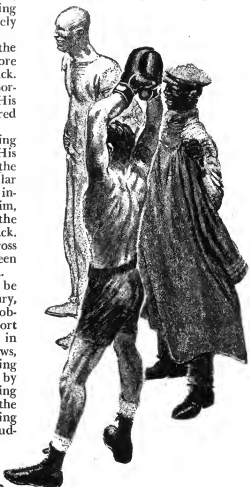
Pat still called him "kid," which was pretty funny. Willy did not answer. He needed every breath. Pat put water on him and wiped it off, and Kid combed his short hair back. Pat said a few things about style—not much. Willy nodded. It was murder in there, and they both knew it.

The second was a good bit like the first. When Kayo landed, it hurt. When Willy landed, it may have hurt all right, but the lean hardness of the boy soaked up punishment like—well, the way Willy Boulder did at that age.

There was no flaw in the attack. Willy sought one, moving around. His own left kept flicking in there, making Kayo hit from off-balance when the going was really brutal. Another clon on the face increased the swelling, but Willy chunked two good hooks to the kidneys which slowed Kayo down just enough.

The whole of his body hurt. It was the third round. He heaved air into his lungs, and Pat Hafey said in his ear: "I'd cross him just once."

Willy nodded. He went out. He saw the weaving, crouched boy coming, dancing, intense. He let Kayo come close and begin hooking.



Willy saw Dempsey and Tunney and Sharkey, all giving generously of their applause.

He dropped his heels. He threw a right cross. It came only off his chest, a short punch. Willy's shoulders were in it, and his hip and his leg. It crashed against Kayo's head.

The throng came up, screaming. The challenger was down. For the first time in his career, Kayo Dollar was off his feet.

Willy retreated to the neutral corner, but his face was never turned away. He saw the referee start to count, and he saw something else. He saw Kayo, livid with humiliation, refusing to take a count, coming to his feet. Past the referee the boy hurtled, strong as a bull, thirsting for Willy's blood. There was no thought of other days, of war hardships shared, of Willy's kindness and Kayo's rewarding obedience to orders and lessons taught. There were only two workmen, the best of their class, meeting to decide a winner—and champion.

WILLY slid away. This was a time for retreat. He fiddled around, and Kayo went into the ropes, all entangled, and the bell rang.

In his corner, Pat was reading a message, glaring. Willy sat down, and Kid Atkins took over. Pat was white. Willy reached out a gloved hand and seized the scrap of paper.

"We are in your dressing-room with Mrs. Boulder," it read, unbelievably. "We expect Kayo to win by a kayo. And that is not a joke." It was signed only "X."

Willy said: "Lemme get down out of here. Lemme get back there."

The whistle blew. Pat said: "Fight him, Willy. He's awful good. Fight your man."

Pat stepped down, faded from view. Kid Atkins climbed down. The bell rang. Willy got up, confused.

The avalanche hit him. He went into the ropes. Kayo had bounded from his corner to Willy's in one jump. The brown fists hammered as the boy sought revenge for the knockdown of the previous round. Willy juggled with black unconsciousness. Pinned to the ropes, he could not untrack, could not get his defenses organized. His mouthpiece fell out; he doubled over, leaped inside the hooks and pushed.

Kayo leaned back fiercely, trying to pin the champ. Willy did a sidestep and used Kayo's weight to let the boy reverse positions, and then he had Kayo on the ropes, and his gloves came up. He got away, walking sideways, shoulders hunched, peering past his shell-like defense, grinning a little. His teeth were white; and the crowd, recognizing the old Willy Boulder grin, now that the disfiguring mouthpiece was gone, hushed on the moment.

Calmness rode him. He saw the attack coming and thrust forward a long

left. Kayo Dollar ran into it as Willy moved behind it, shifting, then following through with yet another left. The kid shook his head, bulled and tried to come past.

Willy put the left there again. He had the range now. He dusted off the nose, the right eye of the challenger. He let the hooks sail closely past his middle.

The round ended. He came to his corner, and Pat was there. Willy said: "It had me scared for a minute. I guess that's what Miner intended, huh? He wouldn't dare go in there. He'd be bound to get caught, and he knows what would happen to him. Miner ain't that dumb."

Pat said: "You figured it out good, kid. Can you tag this character?"

Willy said: "He's awful good."

Nevertheless, the left served him, now that he had solved the style. He pushed it out there. Kayo Dollar bucked and strove and fought. Willy, moving carefully, easily, bore the arrows of outraged lefts and rights. And always Willy chopped and stabbed. The body of the lean, fit challenger began to redden.

Suddenly, amazingly, the referee was bending, informing them, needlessly, that it was the last round. Willy stared at Pat, who shrugged, grave-faced. Kid Atkins said: "This it, Willy boy. This the very round, son. You done hold him all the way. This round tell."

Willy looked down at his hands. Even his forearms ached from the hooks. His legs trembled a little. He was thirty-one, the fifteenth round was coming up, and his title was on a limb. He could tell from the way Pat looked, from Atkins' honest words.

He said: "Well, okay." He could see the sweating of his cheek by rolling his eyes just a trifle. The eye hurt, too. His lips were swollen, and he tasted blood. He said: "I hope Lacey got Miner, at that."

He looked for Sue Haley, who had raised him and whom he loved dearly. She waved at him. Bo Martini seemed to come in from some place and stood cheering. Bo was pale, Willy thought, and had a white handkerchief in his hand. It seemed queer.

THE inevitable clang of the bell, Willy's last brazen call to duty, sounded on the night air. The crowd came to its feet, and every man knew this round was it, that the amazingly clever Willy Boulder had thus far stood off a young adversary who had everything needed to be a champion.

There was no sign of weariness and little sign of combat on the young, hard features of Kayo Dollar. He pranced, restless. He came off the ropes like a man shot out of a circus gun, leaping and swinging. He rushed it Willy as though to blow him out of the ring by the very force of his attack.

Willy stepped sidewise, then he stepped back. He stepped this way, and then, his shoulder stiff, his arm snakelike, he put the left in there. Kayo, shaking with rage, essayed to get by. He did get by.

A hook rattled Willy's teeth. He went to the ropes. He rolled and took one to the body which nearly sank him for good. He rolled back, crossing his hands, getting them inside the powerful arms, showing Kayo to the ropes, roughing him a little.

Kayo snorted and came back, raging, eyes blazing. Willy bent his back and arched his belly. His left came up. He threw a right up underneath the left. Dollar was leaning head foremost in his eagerness, the muscles rippling, his lists swinging in the pattern Willy had memorized by now.

The first uppercut popped Kayo's head above the water-mark. The second, going shrewdly to the body, sent him back. His arms flipped wide to maintain balance: his eyes opened wide; his mouth showed the red rubber piece between his lips. A straight left sent him on the ropes, blundering.

Willy took his tired legs forward. His knees shook. He saw the desperation in the kid's face, now—it was crystal clear. He popped a left, and the right was the second half of a one-two. The kid rolled on the ropes, panting, his eyes blurring, now. A fusillade of punches would drop him.

Willy moved. He threw a short left to bring the kid's chin within reach of a roundhouse right he had already wound up in the back of his mind. The ball park was a madhouse of sound. Willy had his crown safe; he had only to drill home the old reliable, that right which had sunk a hundred.

The kid tried to fight back. He actually got his feet braced under him. It would take more than one punch to knock him cold. It would take several.

Willy aimed the right. Then he checked and his eye went to his corner. Pat, leaning upon the apron, held up his hands, flashed them again. Twenty seconds, that meant.

Willy let the right miss by a cat's whisker. He let the kid come off the ropes and clinch. He held the kid very tight, but in such a manner that it seemed to the crowd that Kayo, his knees patently buckling, was doing the clinching. He waltzed around, acting to the hilt. He muttered in Kayo's ear: "Just keep waltzin'. We give them their money's worth. I'll carry you, bub."

And then it was over, and Kayo had not been smashed by a relentless attack. His brain-centers were safe for future use—when he would surely be champion. For the judges handed up their slips without delay now, and there was no doubt whatsoever, except among the smart, odds-laying gamblers, who had won.

Willy took the applause with up-raised, clasped mitts, soaking it up. He saw Dempsey and Mickey Walker and Tunney and Sharkey and the others down there, all standing, all giving generously of their applause—and it was the last time, and he was loving it. A wave of nostalgia swept over him as Pat draped him with the old robe which read WILLY BOULDER, MIDBURGH CHAMPION, and Kid Atkins beat time on the pail, and they went down through the cordon of cops to the dressing-room—that dressing-room he was so eager to gain.

HE whirled inside, staring about. Bo Martini was there, his hand bandaged. He said: "It's all right, kid. She's in the hospital. And what do you know, you bum, it's a boy!"

Willy said dazedly: "She—we—a boy? She—had it?"

Bo said airily: "There was a little bit trouble. That jerk, that Carraway, he wasn't sick; he was nuts. He come in here with Farese, who is dumb, and they tried scarin' Mary, but Lacey was tailin' them. They put a gat on Lacey, an' then the note come down, and I come up and took a look, see?"

Willy grated: "Mary? They—they scared her?"

"Nah, you know she ain't scared of nothin'," said Bo. He laughed hugely. "You shoulda seen that copper and them with a gun on him. He looked like a sap. He looked like he was dyin' of humiliation!"

Willy was tearing at the bandages the Kid was trying to cut from his hands. "What happened?" he begged.

Bo said: "I shot that bum, that Carraway. He was nuts. Lacey took Farese to the can an' Mary to the hospital. Lucky the hospital was close by. That dumb copper come in handy for once, the jerk."

"My God," said Willy agonizedly, "lemme in that shower!" He tore for the door, running out of his trunks.

The three sat and looked at each other, Kid Atkins, Pat Haley and Bo Martini. They shared a grin around. The water roared in the showers.

"Winnah and still champeen," said Kid Atkins. "Hot dickety!"

"If he'd ever know 'bout this rhu-barb," Bo said, "it'd been bad. Miner wasn't in it, ya know. That Miner—he ain't that dumb. He just lost his shirt betting against our Willy."

"Miner, Farese, Carraway—they're all gone," said Pat Haley. "It's been a long haul. But we're almost home, huh?"

"Hell, Mayor, you ain't never home until they throw that dirt on you," said Bo cheerfully. Willy came rushing from the shower. Bo said: "I got a car waitin'. What you goin' to name the *bambino*, huh?"

"Patrick Kid Martini Boulder," said Willy. "Hurry, will you, pals?"

Steamboating in Northern Canada requires something special—as witness this deeply interesting story by the author of "Bear's Lullaby."

by JOHN
BEAMES

*Illustrated by
L. R. Gustavson*

"Why don't you sell, Johnny? Why not sell out? I mightn't offer you as good a price again."



HIGH WATER

CAP'N JOHNNY PUTT stood on the river-bank and looked gloomily down on the cause of his trouble, the rampaging waters of the Hillkirk. The stream had never been so high, and on the muddy, foam-flecked current big trees were going by swiftly.

At the wharf the water was almost up to the stringpiece, and the two steamboats rode high, tugging at their moorings. The *Daisy K. Putt* belonged to Cap'n Johnny, and he had sailed her for years on the rivers and lakes of the North.

He had kept the little steamboat neat, clean and freshly painted, but she was old, and her day was passing. It had been a long, hard struggle, but it looked as if it were going to end in defeat. Cap'n Johnny did not know whether to give up the struggle or fight to the bitter end. There was a little droop to his short, sturdy, usually erect figure.

The *Northern Pride* was moored just astern of the *Daisy*, and belonged to Ad Bischoff, Cap'n Johnny's long-time rival. She was a much bigger boat, more heavily engined, faster.

It was Ad Bischoff who now spoke at his elbow. "Mornin', Johnny, How's business?"

"I guess this gives you the edge," answered Cap'n Johnny with a sweep of his hand toward the river. "It certainly don't help me."

Ad Bischoff was very tall and loose-jointed. He bent to talk to Cap'n Johnny, making pecking motions at him with a huge hooked nose.

"Well, why don't you sell, Johnny? Why not sell out? I'll pay you what she's worth. I'll use her upriver. Why, you can even pilot her if you want. I'll have a depot at White Sand Lake, and you can pick up your cargoes there for up the Ketakai and Pintail, and anywhere the *Pride* can't go at low water."

"What about my crew?" demurred Cap'n Johnny.

Ad gave his head a negative jerk. "That feller Bram don't work on any boat of mine; he's too free with his tongue. Nate Jarman's never sober; he's one of the things that's been holdin' you back."

"Oh, I guess I'll try her one more season," said Cap'n Johnny.

Ad Bischoff scowled.

"Don't be foolish. I may as well tell you right now I'm handlin' the Gay Lassie freight this season, and the Gold Button's too."

"Oh, you are! Goin' to try and run the Ketakai?"

"There's plenty water this season," returned Ad. "The *Pride* can give better service than you can. I didn't shade prices."

"Guess there's water enough," agreed Cap'n Johnny. "But you don't know the Ketakai—there's some bad spots on her, high water or low."



"She's a fast boat on the open river . . . but we'll get there just the same."

"I can handle the *Pride* any place there's water enough to float her," Ad answered arrogantly.

Cap'n Johnny shrugged. "You know your own business, but I'll keep the *Daisy* for this season anyway."

"I mightn't offer you as good a price again," urged Ad.

Cap'n Johnny smiled sadly. "Well, I'll give you first chance if I do decide to sell."

They parted, and Cap'n Johnny went down to the *Daisy*. Wilbur Bram, his engineer, had drawn a bucket of water from the river and was washing himself. He was tall, stooped, popeyed and shock-headed.

"Well, Wilbur," said Cap'n Johnny despondently, "I guess this is where we lose out."

"Pooh!" sputtered the engineer, blowing the soapuds from his walrus mustache. "You got a grouch, Cap'n. This high water won't last forever."

Cap'n Johnny shrugged.

"It don't have to. This season'll finish us. All the freight I been able to round up was a measly five ton—no passengers. That won't even pay our expenses."

"What about Gay Lassie and Gold Button?"

"Ad Bischoff got 'em."

"Why, the dirty chiseler! You know what I think of that guy. I told him, too, and he don't like me plenty. What the hell does he know about runnin' the Ketakai?"

"Oh, this high water will take him through."

"Maybe this one time; but if he tries her at low water, he'll pile her up sure as hell."

"But it's this time that counts. If we can't get any freight this season, we're out of business. Well, I guess we'll take what freight we got and pull out. Where's the crew?"

"I guess Nate's still sleepin' off his last jag some place. Jonesey and Dufour was around, but they told me they wasn't comin' back—said they could get better money."

Cap'n Johnny sighed. "Guess they can. Well, I'll wait a day or two then, see if I can dig up some more freight, and hire a couple of men."

He went back to town, but it was the same story everywhere: nobody wanted to ship in the *Daisy* when the

Pride was twice as fast and could promise much quicker delivery. Passengers preferred the better accommodation of the bigger boat. And deckhands were not easy to get at wages Cap'n Johnny could afford to pay.

Next day, however, he had a small piece of luck, meeting three young prospectors with a proposition to make.

"My name's Thompson," explained the leader, "and these are my partners, Tommy West and Jim Holberg. We have some gold claims up the Ketakai. We've had a hell of a time raisin' cash for development work. We've had two extensions from the Department, but our time's up on the 24th. We've got to be on the ground by then. Can you get us there in time, and what'll you charge?"

"How much stuff you got?"

Thompson told him.

"That'll be two hundred bucks if you go as passengers."

"Couldn't you do better than that, Cap'n? We're pretty short, you know. Could we work our way? I've done a little steamboating, and my partners are good workers."

Cap'n Johnny considered. "Maybe we could arrange it. If you'll stay with me till the *Daisy's* unloaded, and help load any freight I pick up at the other end, I'll take the three of you and your outfit for a hundred dollars."

"It's a deal, Cap'n. Here's the money. But can you make it by the 24th?"

"If na'hin' goes wrong. You hustle your stuff aboard while I go dig up my mate, and we'll pull out at daylight. Suit you?"

"Finc, Cap'n."

CAP'N JOHNNY found Nate Jarman, his mate, in a room over a Chinese restaurant. Nate was one of the best men on the river when sober; but just now his flat face was an unwholesome gray, his dark eyes bleary.

"Come along now," said Cap'n Johnny, "I need you. Roll out and wash yourself—you look like you been layin' in the gutter all night."

"That's what I was, Cap'n," admitted Nate. "Don't know how I got there—must of been somep'n I et. But could I have a little advance now—just a few bucks? Just to get my laundry."

"Your laundry be damned, Nate! You know you aint got any. Look, I'll take a bottle aboard for you to sober up on, but you don't get even a sniff at it until you're aboard the *Daisy*."

"I'm tur'ble shaky, Cap'n. My stomach seems to have gone back on me. I need some medicine—just a little nip, eh?"

But Cap'n Johnny hardened his heart. "There'll be a drink waitin' for you aboard the *Daisy*. Come on now—get washed up."

He helped Nate aboard the *Daisy*, gave him a stiff drink and saw him into his bunk. "Mind, I want you bright and sober in the mornin'," he warned. "You stir out of that bunk, and I'll drown you in the river."

Thompson, West and Holberg brought their freight down that afternoon, and handled the rest of the meager cargo aboard. In the thick white mist of dawn the *Daisy K. Putt* poked her blunt nose out into the current of the Hillkirk.

Ashore, Cap'n Johnny was mild and soft-spoken, not very sure of himself; but the moment he stepped into his pilothouse he became a different man. Here he was really at home, keen-eyed, vigilant and resourceful, making quick and sure decisions, his voice ringing.

The mist was thick, but he knew every bend in the stream, was alert to every trick of the shifting, treacherous sandbars. It was true that the Hillkirk was high enough to give the *Daisy* plenty of water over all the bars in midstream, but she was not strong enough to meet the rushing current head-on.

Her engines were old, and though Wilbur Bram was as good an engineer as ever held a certificate and understood how to get the last ounce of power out of them, Cap'n Johnny had to hunt easy water.

So he took a devious course. There was a strip of slack at the tail of each bar, and up this the little steamboat would kick her way, rainbows fluttering above her stern wheel. The black snout of a snag or a humped ripple would warn Cap'n Johnny that the water was getting too shoaly and he would edge off. Sometimes he would creep up the inside of a bar, at others he would quarter across to some slowly coiling eddy under the nose of a point.

At intervals there would be the dull thud of snag or deadhead striking her bottom, or there would be an ominous slowing down while sand boiled up

astern, but she never really went aground or had to back up.

This was merely normal navigation for Cap'n Johnny, and in an apparently casual way he took chances that were only justified by his skill and knowledge. His passenger-crew sometimes looked apprehensively up at the unperturbed face in the tiny pilothouse.

Said Thompson to Wilbur Bram: "Say, aint this cap'n of ours pretty damn' reckless? We just slithered by that big tree with its roots sticking up, and several times we've kicked up a lot of sand."

"Don't fret," returned Wilbur placidly. "Cap'n Johnny can sail this here boat on a heavy dew. You want to get up the Ketakai in a hurry, don't you? Leave it to Cap'n Johnny."

THERE was no navigating the Hillkirk after dark, and no one to do it—for Cap'n Johnny had been on his feet and hard at work all day. Nate Jarman, though beginning to creep around, was still unfit to be trusted with the wheel. So, toward evening, they tied up at a wood-camp and loaded fuel for the trip.

"We didn't make very good time today, Cap'n," said Thompson anxiously. "Are you sure we can make it by the 24th?"

"I think so," was the reply. "The river's higher than I ever knew her, and that's a bad current; but the high water'll let us go places we couldn't any other time. I think we'll make her in good time."

But he was more worried than he cared to show. Wilbur told him in a low voice that he was having trouble with a cylinder-head and was wasting steam. The pair worked over it half the night.

"Guess she'll hold now, Cap'n," said the engineer at length. "But she'll need a thorough overhauling pretty soon."



With a pikepole West dragged him alongside, like a gaffed fish.



Like a fat eel the Daisy began to wriggle up a sluggish channel. The crew had a busy session with the poles.

"We'll try and keep her hangin' together for this trip anyway," said Cap'n Johnny. "It may be our last."

"Aw, things aint that bad, Johnny."

Cap'n Johnny did not tell him that one reason why he had refused to sell the *Daisy* was that Ad Bischoff would not employ him as engineer. Wilbur had a family, and he was not an easy man to get along with. If he lost his job on the *Daisy*, he might find himself in serious difficulties.

"Say, did you quarrel with Ad?" Cap'n Johnny asked.

"Naw, just told him he was a cheap four-flusher and a bum pilot. That was the plain simple truth, and nothin' for him to get mad about. He didn't need to chisel in on your territory. If you ask me, he's just plain hog."

"Oh, I don't know—Ad has a right to get freight where he can, and take his boat any place he can find water enough, and he don't owe me anything."

"He's just plain, ordinary, common, measly hog," insisted Wilbur, "and I'll tell him so next time I see him."

The *Daisy* had the river to herself until about noon, and then a smudge of smoke grew up out of the water on a long reach, and under it appeared a white dot.

Thompson climbed to the pilot-house. "Do you know the *Pride's* comin' up behind us to beat the devil, Cap'n?"

Cap'n Johnny glanced over his shoulder, and immediately turned back to the tricky currents ahead. "She's a fast boat on the open river," he admitted.

"Can't we go any faster?"

"No, but we'll get there just the same."

Brave in white paint with blue and yellow trimmings, her neat brasswork agleam, white lace at her stern wheel, the *Pride* marched grandly by, tooting her whistle derisively. Her high wash, spreading in a humped wave all across the river, set the *Daisy* to wallowing ungracefully.

The three young prospectors observed her progress gloomily. "Pity we didn't go in a real steamboat," Holberg complained.

"Pity we didn't have the price," snapped Thompson. "But I think Cap'n Johnny'll get us up the Ketakai in time."

"You've a lot more faith in him than I have," said West. "I don't think much of him and his sardine can."

The *Pride* dwindled to the size of an ashtray and vanished around the bend ahead.

In a despondent frame of mind, Cap'n Johnny watched her disappear. It made him sick to think that he might have to sell the *Daisy* and become a paid employee after all these years of being his own master.

He was a man very slow to anger. He liked to think well of people, was unsuspicious, anxious to be fair, and prepared to lose rather than take a mean advantage. But the sight of the *Pride* giving the *Daisy* her wash so contemptuously, brought a wave of resentment. He began to mutter to himself as was his way on the infrequent occasions when he lost his temper.

"Ad knows this high water won't last. Knows damn' well he can't run the Ketakai on ordinary water. Didn't have to take the Gay Lassie and Gold Button away from me. Knows they're my main standby. Knows he can't give 'em steady service."

He gave the wheel a vicious jerk and snatched the *Daisy's* nose away from a deadhead, then spun the wheel back.

"Just out to break me, then buy the *Daisy* and make me his hired man. I'd be stuck up there all season at White Sand—never get a chance to come in and see my kids. Can't take 'em up with me no school."

He crept up the tail of a bar until the vessel was almost aground, then twitched her off into deeper water.

"Just out to break me, and I never did him any harm. Damn' dirty trick, that's what it is!"

FOR a while he was busy sliding in and out of a maze of sandbars where the water was easy but navigation very tricky. Then he straightened out on a long reach.

"He can't do this with the *Pride*. All he knows is bull her right up the middle of the ditch. I've forgotten more about piloting than he ever knew. Well, he'll have work takin' that big scow up the Ketakai."

He pulled the *Daisy* over a trifle to take advantage of slack water in an eddy.

"I'll show him steamboatin'. He thinks he'll make the Ketakai before I do. He's got another think comin'. I'll show him a trick or two. I bet he daren't run the Double Gut. Well, I will. Maybe Howley's Cutoff too."

They came to the Drowned Flats, where the flooded river was some six miles wide. Clumps of willow stood up as islets here, and the whole expanse was seamed with snies. There was water enough in most places, but Cap'n Johnny alone knew where.

Nate Jarman, fortified with a stiff jolt of rye, took post in the bows with his sounding-pole, while Cap'n Johnny up above, decided by the gleam of a ripple that there was no road in that direction, or by the slick over a hollow that there was.

In doubtful spots Nate plunged his pole. "Full fathom," he would drone. "Five, five, four-half, four. Half-fathom—shoalin'."

Cap'n Johnny would spin the wheel, and the *Daisy* would edge cautiously away. Mostly they traveled slowly, but when they hit a snie leading in the right direction, Wilbur would open his throttle and the little boat would romp along, her wash rolling wide and high across the Flats.

Suddenly Nate would yell, "Half-fathom—shoalin'!" and Cap'n Johnny would jiggle the wheel, and Wilbur would choke his throttle until the stern wheel was barely turning over. Now and then she would bump a little, and the crew would plunge poles overside and push like mad.

As the sun was throwing its last level beams across the muddy expanse, Cap'n Johnny called jubilantly: "There she is, boys—take a look at her."

Abreast of them, a half-mile to the west, the white superstructure of the *Pride* showed clearly against the dark woods. She was cautiously following the deep but tortuous main channel.

The three prospectors cheered. "I thought Cap'n Johnny knew his business," boasted Thompson.

"Okay, wise guy," grinned West. The *Daisy* continued to dodge in and out among the willow clumps, sometimes with less than a half-fathom of water under her. They found solid ground at last, and tied up for the night.

In the morning Cap'n Johnny bore up for the Double Gut, two roughly parallel old river channels connected by snies. The way in was behind a long bar and a wooded island.

"If you ask me, this feller takes too many chances," said West anxiously. "If we get stuck in here for a day or two, good-by to those claims."

"I still believe in Cap'n Johnny," answered Thompson.

"The guy's nuts," observed Holberg. "He thinks Cap'n Johnny's the world's marvel."

"Stand by with them poles, boys," warned Nate. "There's some bad spots in here."

They nosed up the West Gut until Cap'n Johnny decided to cross over to the East Gut by way of a narrow cross-channel. Here the turn was sharp, and the *Daisy* went aground. Wilbur reversed his engines and the crew sweated at their poles until she backed off. An inch at a time she crept up the snie into the East Gut, where the black water was deep and

dead, and Cap'n Johnny called for steam.

They swung out into the main channel again just as the *Pride* came panting around a bend more than a mile below. However, when she had to buck the main current, the little steamboat lost ground fast, and presently the *Pride* went charging by again. Ad Bischoff leaned out of the pilot-house and waved his hand mockingly.

Cap'n Johnny's resentment had cooled a little when he saw the *Pride* astern, but now it surged back again hotter than ever. "Boy, if you're ever in trouble, don't ask me to help you," he muttered between clenched teeth.

THE *Pride* had been long out of sight and the afternoon was drawing on, when he called Thompson up to the pilothouse. "Got good eyes?" he asked.

"Yes, I've pretty good eyes, Cap'n."

"Well, you see those two spruces standin' by themselves, just above that point there?"

"I see 'em."

"All right, take a line on 'em to the water's edge, and tell me can you see a white rock."

Thompson stared long and hard. "No, Cap'n, I'm positive there's no white rock there."

"I can't see it either, and that means we can maybe run Howley's Cutoff. I've run it twice, but that was with a pretty small boat, smaller than the *Daisy*. Now, we may get stuck there; but if we don't, we're sure of making the Ketakai long before the 24th."

"If we take the main river for it, Cap'n, what then?"

"We have to run the Narrows. With the water as it is, it'll take even the *Pride* all she knows to get through 'em to White Sand Lake tomorrow. It would likely take us until the day after, and it'd be just touch and go if we could make the 24th deadline. I think we can run the cutoff, but I want to know if you're willing to take the chance?"

"As far as I'm concerned, Cap'n, you can go ahead."

Cap'n Johnny chuckled. "Boy, do you know, I'd like to give Ad Bischoff a run this trip."

Thompson grinned back at him. "I do too, Cap'n. Nothing would tickle me more."

"All right, go down and stand by with your pole—you'll need it."

With her engines going dead slow, the *Daisy* slewed in mid-channel and headed for a narrow break in the forest wall. Like a fat eel she began to wriggle up a sluggish channel. Willows scraped and thrashed against her sides; lofty balm-of-Gilead trees shut out the light.

Nate had a busy session with his sounding-pole. His drinking habits had not improved his eyesight, and he

had difficulty reading the marks in the leafy twilight.

"Call that stick wrong once more," roared Cap'n Johnny, "and I'll sail the boat right over you. I want half-fathom or better."

"Half-fathom mud," growled Nate. "It's more mud'n water in here."

Cap'n Johnny had to give in at last. "All right, boys, we'll tie up for the night."

He set up a marked stick at the water's edge, and betrayed his first open sign of anxiety. "If the water drops through the night," he remarked grimly, "I guess I'll have to use the *Daisy* for a house and take up farming here."

BUT morning showed only a half-inch fall in the water-level, and he cheered up. "Boys," he said, "we're a little shy of water, but the mud's nice and soft. We'll slide her through."

It was hard to tell for most of the succeeding four hours whether the little craft was afloat or aground, for her progress was almost amphibious. Part of the time they were in a swamp, pushing their way through rafts of rotting reeds, and later in a channel where willow roots formed a mat just under the surface.

Cap'n Johnny jiggled the wheel incessantly, and Wilbur stood with one hand on the throttle, while the rest poled or hacked at roots. At last they reached White Sand Lake, where a bar, impassable at low water, had yet to be crossed.

"Take the anchor out," ordered Cap'n Johnny.

They took the anchor aboard the skiff and dropped it on the other side of the bar. With the crew racing round and round the capstan head, and the stern wheel flinging sand and water high and wide, the *Daisy* squatted across.

Cap'n Johnny rubbed his hands. "Well, if nothing goes wrong now, we're all set. Nate, I want you to take the wheel for a couple of hours. I need a little rest before we hit the Ketaki. Head her south of Pig Island and across to Fourteen Mile Point."

Nate mounted to the pilothouse and the *Daisy* chugged cheerfully across a calm blue floor under a calm blue sky, and one could look down through the clear water to the white quartz sand that gave the lake its name. On all sides spruce-clad islets floated like vessels at anchor.

Trouble seemed remote and impossible in a world so peaceful and lovely. The prospectors lolled on the shady side of the deck; Wilbur left the throttle wide open and half-dozed by the engine-room door, and Nate dreamily fingered the spokes of the wheel.

In his bunk, Cap'n Johnny murmured, "I'll stick with her—I won't



The Daisy rounded to in the main channel under

let Ad beat me," and drifted off into slumber.

The *Daisy* stopped dead with a jolt that almost sent her deckhouse overboard. Wilbur flung himself at the throttle and shut it off. Cap'n Johnny bounded from his berth and up the pilothouse ladder.

He found Nate staring helplessly and nursing a cut on his jawbone gashed by a spoke of the wheel. "Thought there was plenty water," he mumbled. "Figured to save you eight mile by goin' inside Pig Island."

Cap'n Johnny stared at him hard. "Are you still drunk?" he asked bitterly. "How long does it take you to get over a jag?"

"Trouble is," returned Nate sulenly, "I'm too cold sober—get bright ideas."

They loaded the anchor into the skiff and carried it astern. With the crew heaving on the capstan, Wilbur giving her full steam astern, and Cap'n Johnny jiggling the wheel, they tried to claw off. But Nate had jammed her on the shoal at full speed, and she was aground for nearly her whole length. She seemed readier to be torn to pieces than to float.

"No good," said Cap'n Johnny. "Only rippin' the guts out of her. We'll have to try throwin' the wood

overboard and see if that lightens her enough."

They jettisoned the wood, manned the capstan again and started the engines. She stirred a little. They were too busy to notice an inky cloud sweeping up the sky. The northern squall heralded its approach by a blast of icy wind. Then came thunder, lightning, hail as big as marbles, and short steep waves.

The *Daisy* heeled suddenly, washing Holberg and a few sticks of cordwood overboard. With one side of her stern wheel churning up mud and the other spinning in the air, she began to turn like a bug on a pin. Then the surge lifted her clear and dropped her in deep water, where she righted herself like a duck.

Thompson shouted and pointed to Holberg, clinging to a stick of cordwood with the waves washing over him. Cap'n Johnny ordered the anchor slipped, put the *Daisy's* head hauled down, and she went pitching and wallowing over the combers. As they drove past Holberg, West reached out with a pikepole and dragged him alongside like a gaffed fish.

The squall raced away, leaving a dirty sky and an angry lake. The *Daisy* was well in hand, but her fuel was scattered over a square mile of



the very nose of the laboring *Pride*. A collision seemed inevitable.

troubled water. They salvaged some of it with the skiff, found and got the anchor up, and bore up for Burnt Island.

They had to anchor twenty feet from shore, and waded in to where black rampikes towered above the underbrush. By the light of a bonfire on shore and lanterns on the *Daisy*, they cut wood in the chilly rain and carried it aboard. It was past midnight.

"Well, the *Pride* didn't go by, anyway," said Thompson.

"No, she'd tie up at White Sand for the night," answered Cap'n Johnny, "but she'll be right on our tail in the mornin'."

In the gray of a drizzling morning they entered the wide estuary of the Ketakai. Soon the imperious tooting astern warned them of the approach of the *Pride*. Her passengers were all astounded to find the despised *Daisy*, so ignominiously left behind two days since, here before them.

Ad Bischoff was angry and humiliated. He arrogantly nosed in on the *Daisy's* quarter, much as a heavy truck crowds a light flivver to the curb, and drove the *Pride* past with no slackening of her engines or care for her wash.

As the *Daisy* fell behind, rolling and pitching in the wake, Cap'n Johnny

ground his teeth. He was really and truly angry at last. With a set frown on his usually smooth forehead, he gripped the wheel.

He called down the speaking-tube: "Wilbur, I want all the steam you can give me short of blowin' up the boiler. I'm goin' to show the boy on ahead he don't know it all."

"Atta boy, Johnny," came the muffled reply.

In contrast to the wide and shallow Hillkirk, the Ketakai was narrow and deep. Its wooded banks were high and steep, and cut-banks frequent, with perilously leaning trees hanging high overhead. The current was swift and snaggy, and the bends sharp.

Cap'n Johnny dared not take his eyes from the river for a moment, and Wilbur stood with his hand on the throttle and his ear to the speaking-tube. Nate stationed himself in the bows with his sounding-pole, while West, Thompson and Holberg rustled wood, kept the fire up, and used their poles when required.

There was no hunting easy water, and the *Daisy's* engines were sometimes hard put to it to keep way on her at all.

The *Pride* was having her own troubles too, for her greater length made it hard for her to negotiate the

sharp turns. She would have to cross over until her bows were nuzzling the bank before her head could be brought round.

The *Daisy*, coughing round a bend, found her rival dead ahead and drifting backward. The *Pride* had bumped and reversed her engines. The spray from her stern wheel splashed the *Daisy's* foredeck, and Cap'n Johnny had to order half-speed astern in a hurry.

He grinned but without mirth. "I've got him worried. I'm goin' to set right here on his tail till he piles her up or goes crazy. He thought it would be a picnic to navigate the Ketakai, eh?"

It grew dark in the gorge. Nate bellowed from the bows. "For Gawd's sake Cap'n, tie up! I can't read the stick no more."

"Get one of the boys to read it for you," Cap'n Johnny bawled back. "I won't tie up till the *Pride* does."

The *Pride* bumped hard again, and at last Bischoff saw that he could not shake off his dogged pursuer and gave orders to moor.

Cap'n Johnny found himself under a dangerously hanging bank, ordered the engines reversed, and drifted cautiously backward to a safe mooring. When she had been made fast both bow and stern, he came down from the pilothouse looking grimmer than anyone had ever seen him.

"I'm goin' to give Ad Bischoff what he's been askin' for," he said. "If you boys'll back me we'll make him remember this trip long as he lives. Now everybody roll in because we're goin' to get him up early in the mornin'."

Only the merest streak of dawn was showing when the *Daisy* nosed around the bend, tooting impudently that she intended to pass.

There was a mad flurry aboard the *Pride*, with Bischoff bawling for the warps to be cast off. The big steamboat blundered out into the channel just in time, straightened away and went snorting up the inky river with the *Daisy* hanging on her heels like an angry terrier.

BISCHOFF dared put no more steam on her; she struck several times even then. More than once the *Daisy* all but crashed into her stern. Nate was in a fever of fear and misery, and often stood wringing his hands, but the three young prospectors, glancing up at the set half-mile on the square face in the pilothouse, worked like madmen.

The river widened, racing shallow and furious over a floor of rock strewn with granite boulders. At lower water this swift was an absolute bar to the ascent of any vessel as big as the *Pride*, but now there was ample depth in the main channel.

Cap'n Johnny surveyed the scene. "I'm goin' by," he told himself. "I'm goin' to show the world that I can beat the *Pride* any time, in any water. If she can get by in the main channel, there'll be water enough for us in the old York-boat chute."

He swung the *Daisy's* nose off to starboard. At first she lost ground. As she twisted and turned among the great masses of granite, the *Pride* forged steadily ahead.

"Gawd help us," whimpered Nate. "Cap'n Johnny's gone crazy. He'll rip the bottom out of the *Daisy*, sure as hell, and we'll all be drowned."

"Aw, shut up, or I'll knock you in the drink and drown you now," snapped West. "We're for Cap'n Johnny in spite of hell and high water. Go to it, old horse."

They came to the chute itself, water sliding in a smooth sheet down a slope of glassy rock. The *Daisy* had not more than three feet of clearance on either side.

"Full steam ahead," commanded Cap'n Johnny. "Set on the safety valve if you have to, but give me steam."

"Full steam it is," grunted Wilbur, and a shower of sparks gushed from the *Daisy's* smokestack.

"We're gainin'," whooped Thompson, beginning to dance and wave his hands. "Hurrah for Cap'n Johnny! Whoop her up and give her hell! Kick her in the belly and make her yell! Heyah, ooyah, hiya, ho!"

"Heyah, ooyah, hiya, ho!" howled his partners.

The *Daisy* missed a big rock by inches, slipped between two more with a hand's-breadth to spare, and rounded to in the main channel under the very nose of the laboring *Pride*. A collision seemed inevitable. Men rushed to the rail with poles to fend off; steam roared from the *Pride's* escapaces as her engines were shut down.

SLOWLY the *Daisy* drew ahead, her crew making derisive gestures and hooting like owls. Then she swung around a bend and had the river to herself.

Cap'n Johnny laughed for the first time in days. "Well, I guess Ad won't be feelin' quite so big right now," he said.

Thompson came up to the pilot-house. "Cap'n, we all think you're a wonder," he grinned.

Cap'n Johnny shook his head and chuckled. "I aint so much, but I got a fine little old steamboat here, and I think I got a pretty good crew too."

"We'll remember that, Cap'n. You don't think the *Pride* can catch us now, do you?"

"Never can tell; this here Ketakai's a wicked little river," returned Cap'n Johnny. "The *Pride* aint makin' the bends very fast, and if we don't

hang up some place, we ought to beat her. Anyway, even if we do hang up, you can walk to your claims from here now and be in time."

When Thompson had left him, however, Cap'n Johnny's jubilant mood swiftly cooled. He began to examine the situation soberly.

"Maybe I did show Ad some steam-boatin'," he mused, "but just what does it get me? He's still on schedule, and he'll deliver his freight on time. Maybe I did make him look foolish, but I didn't beat him. No use kiddin' myself."

He nudged the *Daisy* away from the rip of a submerged snag, and eased her into an eddy. Then there was a short stretch of clear water, and he had time to meditate again.

"I can run the Drowned Flats and the Double Gut, and he can't; but if the water had dropped six inches while we were in Howley's Cutoff, we'd be there for keeps. Just recklessness and fool's luck. I ought to have more sense than tackle it at my age."

"And the York-boat chute. Kid stuff, showin' off. Just got a mad on, like a little baby. Made it all right, but nobody but me knows how close we came to pilin' up. I did it once, but it'll be the last time."

"I just been plain foolish, that's all. Maybe I did show Ad what a smart pilot I am, but if he aint too mad, he's laughin' at me right now. All I really showed was the *Daisy* can't beat the *Pride* at high water, and everybody knows that already. Well, smart boy, I guess you'll end up as Ad Bischoff's hired man yet."

Brooding despondently on the dark prospect, he piloted the *Daisy* skillfully up a channel so tortuous that there was hardly ever a view for more than a hundred yards ahead.

In the afternoon, some twelve miles from their destination, they came to the Double S, two hairpin bends beset by cut-banks. Cap'n Johnny negotiated the first by crowding the bank on the eddy side and pivoting almost at right angles.

As they crept up to the second, he called down the speaking-tube: "We're comin' to the big cut-bank, Wilbur. Just give me way, no more. I'm goin' around the point half an inch at a time."

"Half an inch it is, Cap'n."

Hugging the point side, Cap'n Johnny slid the *Daisy's* nose out until she was half her length in the clear, then put the wheel hard down and roared for full steam ahead. Heeling until her starboard rail almost touched the water, the *Daisy* spun on her heel and whisked by, still keeping on the same side of the river.

Across from her was a towering cut-bank, and as her wash reached it, a slide started. Earth, stones and trees splashed down into the river, raising

the water level several feet. A big spruce growing on the lip of the cut-bank leaned drunkenly outward at an angle of sixty degrees.

Cap'n Johnny's first feeling was one of exultation. He thumped the wheel with his fist. "That stops him. He can't get by that. He just can't get by. I do have him licked, after all. Well, he has it comin' to him. He asked for it."

THEN, as it was with Cap'n Johnny, a more generous thought came. "Ad don't know how dangerous that place is. I want him beat, all right; but I don't know as I want him ruined."

He put the *Daisy* in to the bank and ordered her tied up. He came down on deck. "Look, boys," he said: "I think we ought to warn Ad."

"For why?" inquired Wilbur, sticking out his lower lip, his pop eyes hostile. "Ad Bischoff's supposed to know where he can take his ship and where he can't."

"I don't think I'd get very soft-hearted about him," said Thompson. "I haven't noticed him worryin' much about your health."

"But he don't know the Ketakai," said Cap'n Johnny. "He's just bull-headed enough to try to get around that point, and he can't do it. I wouldn't want him to smash up a fine boat like the *Pride*. Might kill somebody too. I think he ought to be warned."

"Why would you care?" insisted Wilbur. "You know he's tryin' to put you out of business, yeah. Now if he piles his boat up, don't that leave the *Daisy* the only one on the river? Yeah. You leave Ad Bischoff tend his own business, and you tend yours."

Cap'n Johnny shook his head. "I know I got him beat, but I don't want to ruin the feller."

"Well, go tell him and get the laugh," predicted Wilbur.

Cap'n Johnny climbed ashore, and Thompson followed him, but the rest were content to sit down and await their return.

"Nobody can't do nothin' with that guy Johnny," said Wilbur. "He'll freeze to death some day because he give a bum his shirt."

After climbing the bank it was only a walk of about two hundred yards across the neck of land to the lower bend. Cap'n Johnny found the *Pride* laboring to round the first hairpin bend. Ad had to reverse engines twice to get her head over enough.

"He can't do that at the cut-bank," said Cap'n Johnny. "If he tries it, he'll bring the whole works down on his head. I just got to stop him."

They went down the bank, and he scrambled out on a huge boulder and waved his handkerchief. As the *Pride* came abreast and passengers came to



Passengers and crew had been bruised and cut. They dragged a badly scalded engineer out on deck.

the rail to stare at him, he cupped his hands and bawled: "You can't get around the next bend; it's dangerous."

Ad held on his course as if he had not heard. Cap'n Johnny repeated his warning, and a passenger caught it up and repeated it. Still Ad went stubbornly on his way.

"The bull-headed fool," said Cap'n Johnny. "Won't listen to me—thinks I'm pullin' one. Well, I don't give a damn now if he does break his fool neck. A guy that aint even got the decency to stop and listen! What does he suppose I went to all this trouble for? Well, to hell with him!"

He began laboriously to climb the bank, muttering indignantly. He was unused to much walking, and was out of breath by the time he reached the top. He sat down to puff.

"I oughtn't bother with him any more," he said presently. "But you can't tell what'll happen. He might smash her up, kill somebody. They might need help."

"Come on, let's go see," said Thompson.

The spine of the ridge was fairly level going, and they were able to go at a trot toward the point. They reached it just as the *Pride* was rounding to. She nosed into the cut-bank,

starting a small slide, went astern, and edged a little farther along.

Cap'n Johnny waved his hands and yelled: "Don't try it, Ad! Next time you go in under that bank, she'll come down!"

He was too far away to be noticed. The *Pride* went astern a second time, and her head came round. Then full steam was put on her. As she swung over, her stern wheel sent a wave of water washing high up the bank.

Cap'n Johnny put both hands to his head. "Oh, my God, there she comes!"

The whole bank was crumbling. With a low, rushing rumble, thousands of tons of earth and stones slid down itself into the river. The big spruce hurled itself like a javelin out across the *Pride's* stern wheel. The surge under her lifted the boat bodily and flung her high up on the tangle of rocks and driftwood on the point, and crumpled her wheel and rudders to matchwood.

Cap'n Johnny and Thompson ran, slid and clawed their way down the almost vertical bank. They came to where the *Pride's* bows stuck up into the air. The dammed-up river was tearing her stern away. Her smoke-stack had gone over the side, and

flames were already taking hold on her deckhouse.

Cap'n Johnny and Thompson climbed aboard, and found everything in confusion. Most of the passengers and crew had been knocked down, bruised and cut by flying glass. They dragged a badly scalded engineer out on deck. Thompson, clambering to the pilothouse, found Ad Bischoff half stunned, and bleeding from a cut.

The *Pride* was blazing fiercely. Thompson aided Bischoff down the ladder, and Cap'n Johnny rounded up the crew and got them and the scalded engineer on shore. No one else had been seriously hurt, but the boat was evidently a total loss.

The *Daisy* came cautiously drifting downstream, and tied up just above the point. They got the company of the *Pride* aboard.

Ad Bischoff had said nothing up to now, moving in a dazed way and holding a blood-soaked rag to his face.

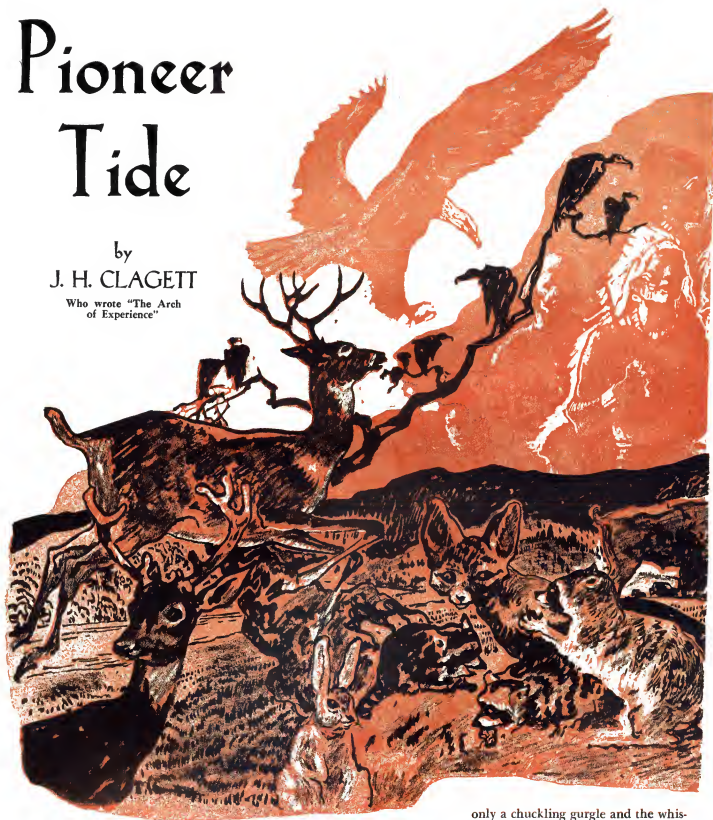
Now he said in a low, sullen voice to Cap'n Johnny: "Well, the *Daisy's* the only boat on the river, eh? Guess you're pretty well satisfied."

Cap'n Johnny shook his head. "No," he said slowly. "I hate to see a fine boat like the *Pride* go up in smoke."

Pioneer Tide

by
J. H. CLAGETT

Who wrote "The Arch
of Experience"



OVER a land as green and unspoiled as the sea, a tide was rising. Stopping now and again at a natural barrier, it redoubled upon itself and swept on again, stronger for having been delayed. The buffalo grazing in majesty; the infinite-seeming reaches of the forests, beautiful in simplicity—all these and others may have felt

in their bones or roots the doom pronounced upon them by that tide. As remorseless as any tide of salt water, it swept on; but it was made of men. . . .

The clearness of the night was clouded just before the dawn as the trees drew out from the growing blackness the shadows they would cast through the coming day. Stars dimmed. The river made little noise,

only a chuckling gurgle and the whisper of water flowing through the water weeds. An irregular splashing and tinkle of rocks from the outer end of the gravel bar marked a mother raccoon showing four black-masked offspring the art of catching crawfish and extracting the mussel from its shell. She washed each bite in the running water; they imitated her and did the same. The tall bluff rising from rocks at the head of the gravel bar was only a shadow in the night.



Light increased. It drew strength from the fading of the stars. The bluff above the river began to stand out in detail. Wisps of mist crocheted a design on the surface of the water. The raccoon's splashing stopped as a group of deer minced to the water's edge to drink and gaze alternately, sensitive ears vibrating in the breeze.

Now all was cool greenness: the green river, the light green of the willows on the bar, the dark green of the cedars, the varying greens of the

trees on the bluff. The sky began to show blue through its gray above the east bank of the river. The first mockingbird of the day began the overture of his song of welcome to the sunrise. A thrush joined in. A cardinal added a touch of scarlet flame in the green. A quail whistled in the meadow of the river-bottom. From above the bluff a crow cawed sleepily.

Suddenly from up the curve of the river a bluejay chattered. The deer paused for the space of an instant and then bounded into the shelter of the willows. The mockingbird was quiet. The gravel bar waited.

There was an interval of silence. Then with the soft rasp of a buckskinned foot over gravel, Jabez Cox, a hunter from Kentucky, parted the willows and stepped to the open bar.

He carried his body in a slouch that could whip into action at the hint of danger. A long rifle was in his hand. He had a careless face, with tawny hair and beard, a high-bridged prominent nose, wide mouth and narrow green eyes. A hunting-shirt of greasy buckskin covered his body, fringed leggings his legs; and beaded moccasins were on his feet. The belt that gathered the hunting-shirt at the waist bore knife and tomahawk, and the butt of a heavy pistol barely showed from the fold of his shirt. He carried a small pack on his back.

He chuckled and said softly to himself, as happens to men who live for long periods alone:

"Reckoned that consarned blue-jay'd skeer off anything worth shooting. Pesky varmint! . . . No matter. Wind's right, and thar'll be another buck along any minute. I'll just scout around, then lay low in these willers."

Lightly as a shadow, he drifted around the bar in the undergrowth. His narrowed eyes seemed to take in every crumb of available information, and his big nose sniffed the wind like that of a hound.

"Reckon thar's nothing hyar. Wal, a juicy haunch o' deer-meat'll taste mighty good. Parched corn kin keep a man a-movin', but it's perishin' little comfort to his innards. Reckon I'll take a chance."

He settled himself carefully into the clump of willows downwind from the bar. Only the toe of one moccasin was in sight, and it looked just like another brown rock near the water's edge.

But back up on the bluff just out of the radius of his scout, two watchers were waiting silently and patiently.

IT had been a long winter. The log and sod hut had been comfortable enough; but bear meat, venison, Indian corn and solitude leave a craving in a man when the spring breaks through—a craving for green food, fiery whisky, and a willing girl. So Jabez was making his spring trip out to have some fun and bring back packhorses to carry his winter's take of furs. A fat haunch of venison from this gravel bar on Barren River would see him nearly back to Harrod's Town. He began singing the words of a lively song under his breath as he thought of the daughter of the tavern-keeper and the evening he had spent with her.

I got a gal at the head of the holler,
Ho-de-ink-tum-did-dle-ah-de-ay
She won't come and I won't foller,
Ho-de-ink-tum-did-dle-ah-de-ay.



And he chuckled, "The hell she wouldn't!" He thought of the softness of her lips, and green fire flickered in his eyes. "And the hell I wouldn't!" he grinned.

Geese in the pond, ducks in the ocean,
Ho-de-ink-tum-did-dle-ah-de-ay
Devil's in the women when they take
a notion,
Ho-de-ink-tum-did-dle-ah-de-ay.

"It shore is." And he chuckled again, thinking of her and her thick black hair and strong figure.

THERE was a click of gravel from upwind, and song and girl fled his mind as if they had never been. A young buck, horns velveted with spring, led a doe to the water's edge. A quick flickering glance around with breath held while he listened, and the hunter brought the long brown barrel up to a level. He brought the white bead of the front sight evenly into the rear notch, lined it with a light spot just back of the buck's left foreleg, and gently squeezed the trigger.

A whipping crack! A straining leap! The start of a bleat of barely felt agony, and the deer fell dead on the golden gravel. The mockingbird stopped singing; the thrush ceased his call; the hum of insects stilled. Nature held her breath. A silence briefly

mourned the passing of a life. Only the water chuckled on, and the echoes of the shot sauntered slowly and mockingly along the twisting bluff.

The killer smiled in satisfaction and rose warily to his feet. As he did so, two heavy shots roared from a thick cedar, and blue smoke veiled the leap of two brown forms. The hunter crumpled to the ground among the willows. Two screeching war-whoops sounded. Triumph filled the hearts of the two warriors. And then when they were only feet away the huddled lanky form twisted suddenly. A hand leveled a heavy pistol—the one fact in the game that the two Indians had not foreseen. It roared, and one of the two plunging figures stopped as though it had run headlong into a wall, and flopped backward from the impact of the bullet.

Knife in hand, the hunter hurled himself against the knees of the second warrior. He seized the Indian's greased wrist; his left shoulder thudded against the red-brown thigh, and the long knife in his right hand buried itself to the bone handle in the hot, straining stomach of his enemy. The brave straitened spasmodically. The knife came out with a gush of blood and buried itself again. A last quavering whoop faded into nothing, and the limp body

sagged to the ground across the panting hunter.

He thrust it roughly from him, rose; and with the green fire flickering again in his eyes, he dragged the knife around the head of the fallen Indian, and ripped off the scalp. He repeated this with the other brave. He fastened the trophies to his belt.

"That'll show the red-skinned varmints!" he grunted as he rapidly loaded the rifle and pistol. "Reckon Jabez Cox is a genuine alligator-horse or a bearcat one! They can't lick old Kaintuck. . . . I'd shore like a slug o' lickin'!"

Nature recovered from her shocked silence, and the mockingbird started his song once more. The hunter walked over to the deer. He cleaned his knife in the clear water and deftly skinned out a haunch. He picked up pack and rifle, and walked off into the green forest with one parting glance at the three still bodies. A buzzard already glided in lessening circles just above the treetops.

The big black birds came and feasted. And the mockingbird sang again from the cedars at sunset, and the bluff faded slowly into blackness. The water chuckled through the night. The wolves came. When the sun shone again in the morning, with the mist rising from the water and

the quail whistling from the meadow, and the smell of sycamore leaves and wet stones rising in the air, the bar looked very much as it had before the killers came. . . .

So came the first fingers of the tide. Alone and feeble at first, and often defeated. But the tide grew and defeated everything. The buffalo and forests had a day less to live. And the tide never stopped till the western star rose only over the Pacific Ocean.



*Illustrated by John
Costigan, N.A.*

Shenandoah's

FIVE months were gone since Terry Tyler and I watched the flames take *Stormalong*. 'Twas nine since we'd left *Shenandoah* fast on the rocks of that island in the wild southern ocean.

I had a job ashore. You might say 'twas a good job. What's the shore to a sailor?

The doctor said I'd been working too hard, worrying too much about my work. He seemed a bit puzzled. "Perhaps there's a woman at the bottom of it? Is it that you're disappointed in love?" he asked.

"A lot you know about it!" said I. What would any landsman know of the love of ships?

"What you need is change of scene," he said. "Why not take a trip in one of these freighters that carry a few passengers? They're said to be very comfortable ships."

"Ships!" I exclaimed contemptuously.

"You don't like ships?" he asked.

"Nothing I like better," I replied.

"It's difficult to figure you out. I think it's a case of nerves. Nothing better for that than a sea voyage. How

about that trip in a freighter, eh?" he continued.

"I'd like to get away from the confounded land," said I.

"Now you talk sense. You'll be a new man when you come back," said he, and wrote me a prescription. As soon as he was gone, I threw it in the waste-basket, and went to thinking of that suggestion about a freighter. Me, a sailor, at sea in a steam kettle! Yet after all, I'd be away from the confounded land. . . .

She was a big black-painted brute with bluff bows, a squat black funnel, and sides like walls. When I say *big*, I don't mean a ten- or fifteen-thousand-tonner. I mean big as compared to *Shenandoah*, *Stormalong* or *Speed-away*, the three clippers I'd sailed in; for she carried nearly as much as two of them together. Instead of four tall

tapering masts she had two short stumpy ones: instead of the graceful spars of a clipper, four ugly derricks sticking up from each at a sharp angle.

I went aboard a few minutes before she pulled out, bound from New York for Capetown, by way ports. At the head of her gangway a fellow in a soiled white jacket and shabby trousers, who somehow seemed not to belong there, gave me a surprised stare and asked: "You the passenger, sir?"

"The passenger? I thought she carried a number," I replied.

"Nine when she's got a full list, sir. You're the only one this voyage. Gives you the pick o' the cabins, sir," he answered.

"Let's have a look at 'em," said I. He led me up an accommodation ladder to her raised midship section, on each side of which was a narrow strip of

"Lay off! Haven't you sense enough to know it's only a matter of a little time till this tub goes to the bottom?" I shouted.



Daughter

An old sailing-ship crew finds itself in trouble aboard a steam kettle.

by BILL ADAMS

steel deck whereon faced two passenger cabins. Forward of those on the starboard side was her first mate's; forward of those to port, her second mate's. Forward of the mates' cabins was the skipper's which was thwartships—or crosswise of the vessel in lubber language—running from side to side with a door opening on each side. The midship section ended a few feet forward of the skipper's cabin. At its after end was one passenger cabin, thwartships, facing astern. "I'll take that thwartship cabin," I told the steward.

"You'll feel the rolling worse, sir, an' it'll be kind of lonesome. I thought you'd like a cabin next the mate's," he said.

On the point of telling him I didn't want anything to do with the skipper or mates of a kettle, I held my peace.

He was a kettle man too, of course. No sense offending him. "How about bringing my grub to my cabin at meal-times?" I asked. If he'd do that, I'd be able to avoid the skipper and mates entirely.

"I'll ask the skipper if it'll be all right, sir. It aint the custom," he replied.

"Tell him I'm an invalid come to sea by the doctor's orders, and would take it as a great favor," said I, and offered him a fat tip.

"You don't give me no tip, sir! I aint seen a sailor in many a day," said he.

"What would you know about sailors?" I asked.

"D'ye mind that there fight in the King's Arms inn at Bristol, when you was master o' the Yankee packet *Shenandoah*? I knowed you the minute I seed you. I was able seaman in a Limey full-rigger moored ahead o' your ship, sir. 'Twas me wot started the fight, askin' wot was the funny-lookin' rag at *Shenandoah*'s peak—just by way o' havin' a bit o' fun, no offense meant, sir," he answered.

"Don't let on to anyone that I'm a sailor. I don't want anything to do with these steam-kettle people," said I, and asked how long he had been in her.

"I jined 'er yestiddy, Cap'n. I was fair sick o' bein' ashore," he replied.

A whistle blew. He turned to go. I called him back. "Don't call me Cap'n. Remember I'm a lubber taking a voyage for his health," I said.

He grinned and went. I had my things arranged, and was sitting on the edge of my bunk looking out to the after-deck when he returned. "It's all sir-garney-oh, Cap'n; and the skipper says to give you his compliments, and tell you as this 'ere craft is yours. 'E 'opes as you'll soon be feelin' well, Cap'n," he said.

"Cut out that Cap'n," said I, and asked: "What sort of fellow's the skipper?"

"Kettle-raised, sir, same as the mates. There's somethin' queer about the second mate, sir. 'E's got a lot o' pictures o' 'orses an' cows in 'is cabin. Says as 'ow 'e's a steamer man. Bloomin' mystery, I call 'im, Cap'n," replied the steward.

"Forget that Cap'n or you'll give the show away," said I, as a step came from the deck without. A shadow darkened my door. A fellow about to pass by

glanced in, saw me and stopped, a broad grin on his face.

"Terry Tyler!" I delightedly cried, looking into the bright cyes of *Shenandoah*'s last master.

"Who wouldn't sell a farm and go to sea?" he laughed, gripping my hand.

"What the blazes are you doing here?" I asked, gripping his.

"Same as you. Had to have a look at the sea again," he replied, and cying a band of braid on his sleeve added: "Second mate of a dirty old kettle! What d'ye think of that?"

"Why only second mate?" I asked.

"I didn't care how I came, as long as I came. The owners weren't willing to take me at first, because I'd never been in steam. I didn't let on I'd ever been anything more than mate in sail," he answered.

"You didn't tell them you'd been master of a clipper?" I asked.

"Think I'd mention *Shenandoah* to people who never owned or knew any craft but kettles?" he retorted.

"This chap's a sailor too," said I, looking at the steward.

"Ah—'twas them there 'orses an' cows as fooled me!" exclaimed the steward.

"Keep your mouth shut, son!" said Terry; then, as a whistle sounded: "I must beat it. We're going out."

THE kettle was named *Aldebaran*. Imagine naming a kettle for a star! As she moved from the dock, a cloud of smoke blew over my cabin, hiding Terry at his station in her stern. It gave me a heartache to see him there, instead of with white sails arching above him. As soon as the stern was clear of the dock, he went to the bridge.

Meeting a beam swell outside, the *Aldebaran* rolled like a drunken old washerwoman. It was summer. The sun blazed down on her steel decks, above which hot air shimmered. She reeked of smoke, grease, hot metal; she shuddered, quivered, and vibrated, from end to end.

The steward's name was Castledine—a Limey, from Yorkshire. Bringing my dinner, he said:

"Sorry, Cap'n—"

"Quit calling me that! Someone'll hear," I interrupted.

"Beg pardon, Cap'n," said he.

"There you go again!" said I.

"It's so 'ard to remember, sir," he said, scratching his head.



Illustrated by
Cleveland
Woodward



"I hope you have a lot of fun taking this old washtub to the Cape single-handed," said I.

"Lineys always are infernally slow at catching on to a thing," said I.

He reddened, looked mad.

"Well, what were you sorry about?" I asked.

"The cook's took sick. The skipper's give me orders to cook for 'im, an' the mates an' you, sir. I'm afraid it's bloomin' 'orrible, Cap'n," he replied.

"It's fine except for that *Captain*, Castledine," said I, and asked who was cooking for the others.

"I aint never done no cookin'; but the skipper knowed I was a sail-raised man. 'E says as them sort 'kin do anything. One o' the engineers is cookin' fer the crew. You'd oughter see it, sir!" he answered.

"I'd rather not," said I.

"It'll be all sir-garney-oh, after Noo Orleans. The skipper'll get a new cook w'en we put in there," he informed me.

IT blew hard till we were down off Florida. I stayed in my cabin, watching the sea, thinking of the old days under sail. Terry didn't come near me. Castledine told me the mate was drunk, and that he and the skipper were taking watch and watch: four hours on, four off.

The mate was still drunk when we neared New Orleans. Terry came to me and asked: "How about you coming mate of this kettle? The skipper's going to put her mate ashore."

"No. You go mate. I'll go second mate," I answered.

"Come on. Let's go see if the skipper'll be willing," he said when we'd flipped a coin to settle the matter.

We went to the bridge. The skipper scowled at me. "I thought you were sick. I don't allow passengers on my bridge. Get to the devil, where you belong!" he snapped.

"He's been second mate and mate of a ship, sir," interposed Terry.

"What's all this about?" growled the skipper, a big red-faced fellow with a bushy beard, bulgy eyes, hands like hams.

"If you need a second mate, I'm willing to take the berth," said I.

"I need a mate," said I.

"I won't serve over Mr. Tyler. I'm willing to go second mate," said I.

"Who d'ye think you are, telling me what you're willing to do?" he shouted.

"Suit yourself, sir! If you won't take him, we'll both go ashore," said Terry.

"What vessel were you ever mate of?" demanded the skipper, glaring at me.

"The Yankee clipper *Shenandoah*," I replied.

"A windjammer man!" he sneered, "What d'ye know about a steamer?"

"What is there to know?" I laughed. "You'll say sir when you speak to me!" he snapped.

"I'm only a passenger. If I come second mate, I'll give you a sir—not until. I know as much about discipline as you do," I retorted.

"I'm only stopping a few hours at New Orleans. Mates are scarce as the devil. I suppose I'll have to take you," he grumbled.

"Very good, sir. I'll give you the best I have," said I.

"You'd better," he snarled—adding, as the bell struck: "It's your watch. Take the bridge."

"Nothing like a happy ship," Terry grinned, when the skipper had left us.

"We're starting fine. Nice sort, isn't he?" said I.

"His bark's a lot worse than his bite, or I miss my guess," replied Terry.

The drunken mate, and sick cook, went ashore as soon as we were moored. Sent by the skipper, to see if he could find a cook on the waterfront, Castledine followed.

"I don't like the look or feel of this old washtub. I guess I'll go ashore too, after all," I told Terry.

"Stick around! Maybe something'll happen. Maybe we'll have some fun," he replied.

"What fun could there be in a kettle?" I asked.

"You and I usually had fun when we were at sea together," he answered.

"What about when we lost *Shenandoah*? That wasn't any fun," I retorted.

"Heaven knows it wasn't," he sadly replied.

Castledine appeared on the dock—at his heels a giant Negro, who pushing his way through a crowd of other Negroes, shouted: "Cout my way! Clear de way for de doctor!"

"See who's coming cook of this kettle! Didn't I tell you we'd have some fun?" cried Terry, as *Shenandoah's* Negro cook came up the gangway.

"I guess I'll stay. It begins to look a bit lucky," said I. Next minute the cook was on the bridge with us, grinning all over his friendly face.

"Ah got me a job cookin' for two genuwine sailors! Two real genuwine sailors! Looks like de good of days was comin' back, Cap'n!" he cried.

WHILE the *Aldebaran* waddled south at her ten miles an hour, Terry and I had plenty of time to talk of the old days under sail. What was become, we wondered, of *Shenandoah's* Rooshian carpenter, her Frog sailmaker; of the broad-shouldered Geordie, foremost hand of *Stormalong*, of her little cockney cook, and all the others.

Except for coming to the bridge to take the sights at nine each morning and at noon, the skipper spent his time in his cabin, or pacing the strip of deck before it. A silent sort, in his mid-forties. Never a smile, nor jest.

"How are you making out, Castledine?" I asked one night, when he was leaving the wheel.

"Taint too bad, sir, wot wi' you an' Mr. Tyler an' the doctor aboard," he replied.

Drowning the rattle of the stokers' shovels that came from the fiddly grating, the giant Negro's voice boomed out, singing his favorite chantey from the old days under sail:

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!
Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, we're bound away,
Across the wide Missouri!

"Stop your infernal noise, you there in the galley!" bellowed the skipper. The cook fell silent. Instantly from the fore-castle head came Castledine's clear tenor, his form dim in the star-light:

Old *Stormalong* is dead and gone,
Waye, aye, Stormalong!
Old *Stormalong* is dead and gone,
Waye, aye, good old Stormalong!

"Stop that noise, you!" bellowed the skipper.

Old *Stormalong* is gone to rest,
Waye, aye, Stormalong!

continued Castledine, paying no heed.

"Mister Mate, go forward and tell that fellow to stop his noise!" called the skipper, to Terry in his cabin.

"He's off watch, sir. He's got a right to sing if he wants to," replied Terry.

"Mister Mate, you'll obey my orders!" thundered the skipper.

"In this case I decline to do so, sir," said Terry quietly.

"Then you stay in your cabin from now on. I'll log you for insubordination, and put you ashore at Montevideo," stormed the skipper, and went down to the well-deck and strode forward. Looking up to Castledine on the fore-castle head, he shouted: "Stop that infernal noise, you!"

"Hi aint yer bloomin' slave, Cap'n. A sailor kin 'ave 'is bit o' singin' in

the dogwatch if 'e wants," came the reply.

The skipper strode back to his cabin, then came to me on the bridge. "You'll put that man in irons," he ordered, handing out a pair of handcuffs to me.

"Not I, sir. He's within his rights." "I'll log you too. I'll put you ashore at Montevideo. I'll see you never get another ship!" he stormed, his eyes savage in the glow of the masthead light, his hamlike fists clenched.

"I hope you have a lot of fun taking this old washtub to the Cape single-handed," said I, laughing in his face.

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I'm going to court her,
Waye, aye, we're bound away
Across the wide Missouri!

came the cook's deep voice from the galley again.

Appearing as though he might burst at any instant, the skipper put the

irons in his pocket and went without another word to his cabin. Looking in on Terry at eight bells, he said in icy tones: "Get to the bridge and stand your watch, Mister. We'll settle this at Montevideo."

THENCEFORWARD Castledine and the Negro cook sang each evening in the dogwatch. After a night or two the *Aldebaran's* deckhands joined in. A night or so later the stokers off watch joined in. Chantey after chantey rang over the sea—halliard chanteys, long-drag and short-drag chanteys, anchor chanteys, American chanteys and Limney chanteys. The skipper could do nothing about it, knew he couldn't, and was surly as a bear.

"I wonder if there are any sailing ships at all left on the sea," I said to Terry, taking the bridge over from me one midnight when we were getting toward Monte.

"I think the Finns still have one or two," he replied.



Pushing through the crowd a giant Negro shouted: "Git out my way! Clear de way for de doctor!"

"Rise and shine! No time to lose. Tumble out!" I cried.



"I don't suppose you'd find an American sailor at sea today," said I.

"About as likely as that you'd find a real cowboy left in Texas," he answered.

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I'm going to court her, *Waye, aye, you rolling river!*

came the cook's deep voice from the galley.

"You there, doctor! You can sing all you like in the dogwatch, but not at other times. You know better," called Terry.

"Beg pardon, Cap'n Tyler. Dat ol' chantey got in my blood an' keeps a-bubbling up," replied the cook.

"And don't call me Captain. Remember, I'm only the mate here," continued Terry.

"Berry good, Cap'n Tyler!" replied the cook, and went off to his bunk shaking with laughter.

JUST as soon as the *Aldebaran* was moored at Montevideo, Terry and I started ashore. Castledine followed us, and the giant Negro cook followed Castledine.

"Where the devil are you going, cook! I've not given you shore-leave!"

shouted the skipper from his cabin door.

"W'ere my ol' Irren's goes, dat's w'ere I goes, sah!" replied the cook.

"Mr. Tyler, you'll be so good as to return aboard. I'd like a word with you," called the skipper. Terry went back aboard. I sat on a bollard to wait for him. Castledine and the cook each sat on a bollard.

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter, *Waye, aye, you rolling river!*

sang the cook. Castledine joined in the chorus. Leaning on her rail, the *Aldebaran*'s deckhands joined in. Stokers came from below and added their voices.

Presently Terry came from the skipper's cabin and beckoned me to come back aboard. Castledine followed me. The cook followed Castledine.

"He knows he can't get any mates in Monte, and he don't want to lose the cook. I told him we'd all stay if he'd forget about logging either us or Castledine. He's not a bad sort really. If he had a clipper under his feet, he'd be all right. I bet he likes the chanteyes just as much as we do, and is only mad because they don't belong in a steam kettle," said Terry,

and called the cook and Castledine to him. "You lads cut out some of that chantey-singing. From now on a little will go a long way. My orders. D'ye hear?" said he.

"Aye-aye, Cap'n," said Castledine and the Negro in one voice.

IT was winter in the South Atlantic. Meeting a stiff beam wind, the *Aldebaran* rolled till it seemed she was about to roll bottom up, day in, day out, for a full week. "How'd one of your clippers behave in this sea?" asked the skipper one noon, the three of us clinging to the bridge-rail side by side.

"She'd be riding like a duck, with dry decks, sir," replied Terry.

The skipper looked at him with an expression half sad, half incredulous. "Well, it can't last forever, boys," said he.

The skipper addressing us as *boys*! 'Twas the first sign he'd shown of being human.

At the end of a week the wind came out of the west and blew at hurricane force. With wind and sea dead aft, the *Aldebaran* rolled even more crazily. Sleep was impossible. After a couple of days everyone aboard was

about ready to say, "Here goes nobody!" and jump over her side. During the first watch on the second night the wind fell. At midnight it was black as pitch, not an air stirring, not a star to be seen. With a feeling of something ominous in the impenetrable darkness, the *Aldebaran* waddled slowly east on a sea almost smooth.

At seven bells, seven-thirty in the morning, I went to the bridge to relieve Terry for breakfast. We were standing side by side looking into the darkness ahead, when the skipper came up. "I don't like the feel of things, boys," said he.

"I don't like it too well myself, sir," said Terry.

"You clipper sailors must have done some pretty tough times. I've often wished I'd been in sail," said the skipper. For some minutes no one spoke. "Get a boat away! The cook's overboard!" cried the skipper, suddenly.

"No sir, I can hear him in the galley," said I.

From far off in the darkness to starboard the words came clear to us:

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, we're bound away across the wide Missouri.

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I'm going to court her,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I'm going to court her,
Waye, aye, we're bound away across the wide Missouri.

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I've dearly bought her,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I've dearly bought her,
Waye, aye, we're bound away across the wide Missouri!

"It's a sailing ship, and she's setting sail!" cried Terry.

The clouds along the eastern horizon cleared. Dawn broke pale over a cold gray sea, showing far away a sailing vessel with nothing left but the stumps of her three masts: her booms gone, her boats gone, her bulwarks stove in, her railing but little above the water.

"They weren't setting sail. They were only singing," said the skipper, and ordered the helmsman to steer toward the wreck. "*Ship ahoy!*" he shouted when we lay close to her with the engines stopped. No answer came. "*Ship ahoy!*" he roared through the megaphone. All hands took up the cry. No answer came.

"There must be someone aboard. Ghosts don't sing chanteys," said the skipper, and ordered me to take a boat and go aboard her. With Castledine, the big Negro cook, and two deckhands at the oars, I pulled alongside the wreck. I looked in her cabin. It was empty. I ran forward. The galley was empty. The forecabin door

was shut. I opened it. In the bunk directly before me lay a motionless figure, its head buried under the blankets. I stepped in and shook it.

"Vot der matter mit you, Frenchy? Vot for you wakes me oop?" grumbled a sleepy voice from under the blankets.

"Rise and shine! No time to lose. Tumble out!" I cried, shaking him again. He threw back the blankets, rose on an elbow, and stared up at me.

"Py shiminy, es it you, sir?" calmly asked the big Norwegian able seaman whom I well remembered as one of *Shenandoah's* crew.

"Frenchy! Ivan! Geordie! Kylon! You, doctor—rise an' shine! Der skipper es here, poys!" he shouted.

Forgetting for the moment that there wasn't a moment to lose, I stared in amazement at the Rooshian carpenter, the Frog sailmaker, and Kylon the big Finn who had been in *Shenandoah*; at the broad-shouldered Geordie and little cockney cook of *Storm-along*.

"How the blazes did all you boys come to be here?" I cried.

"Ve stay togedder ven ve get paid off from der long voyage in *Stormalong* to Freesco, sir. Kylon, he all der time tell us dere is sheeps in Finland. So we go to Finland, and now we es here an' very glad to meet you, Captain," replied the Norwegian.

"She's going down, sir!" shouted Castledine from the boat, as the wreck lurched heavily. Hardly was the last man safe in the boat when she sank like a stone.

"Ah never thought to be seein' ye in a kettle, Cap'n," said the big Geordie, as we pulled alongside the *Aldebaran*.

"I never thought to see myself in one! Captain Tyler's here too," said I.

"Three cheers for two domned loine skippers, boys!" cried the Geordie, and all cheering like mad, the rescued men swarmed up to the *Aldebaran's* deck.

"What's the meaning of this?" asked Captain Martin, as *Shenandoah's* and *Stormalong's* old hands crowded round Terry and me.

"They used to be in the forecabin of the ships the second mate and I were masters of, sir," replied Terry.

"You—you you mean to tell me you were clipper-ship captains?" he gasped, and added: "Now at last I understand. My apologies to you both."

We scarce had the boat back in its davits when a breeze came from dead ahead. Before ten o'clock, a gale was howling. With her engines at full speed, the *Aldebaran* scarce moved. Her bows dipped, burying her broad nose in the sea till it appeared that she was about to dive to the bottom. When her bows lifted and her stern dipped, she seemed to be about to slide backward to the bottom. All day, all night, the wind roared—enor-

mous hailstones clattering on her steel decks, boats, and squat black funnel; spray driving over her in ceaseless clouds; her whole frame quivering to the merciless pounding of barbaric seas.

"If this lasts much longer, she'll—" shouted Captain Martin, the three of us clinging to the bridge-rail; and had but spoken, had not had time to finish his sentence, when the *Aldebaran* suddenly fell off into the trough of the sea, her motion becoming instantly worse.

The chief engineer rushed up the bridge ladder, stared at the skipper, and, his words just audible in the barbarous uproar, shouted: "*Propeller's dropped off!*"

With her engines dead, the *Aldebaran* no longer vibrated and smoke ceased to blow from her funnel. Through a pitch-black night Terry, the skipper, and I clung to her bridge-rail while she rolled, pitched and wallowed, utterly helpless.

Through three days the gale raged without an instant's cessation: every man aboard was completely exhausted save the giant Negro cook, who somehow contrived to have coffee and hot food with untailing regularity at meal-times. The able seamen whom we had rescued, and Castledine, managed to carry coffee and food to the fore-castle, and to the bridge, which neither Captain Martin, Terry or I left save for brief intervals, when, taking it in turns, we endeavored to snatch a few winks on the bare deck of the chart-room. When the wind fell, in the dog-watch between four and six of the third day, the clouds cleared off and a wan light shone on a desolate heaving gray sea which, ere nightfall, was completely hidden by heavy mists sweeping from the wintry south.

"WE'VE drifted a long way, boys, and haven't seen sky, moon, star or sun in almost two weeks," said Captain Martin, and added gloomily: "I wonder where we are—and where do we go from here?"

"Ah's got you gents a nice supper in de mess-room. Dey's hot johnny cake, fry po'k, cawfee an' pie," said the cook, coming up the bridge ladder. Next moment he was strolling back to his galley, singing loudly:

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I'm going to court her,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!

"It's good to have a bit of song, anyway," said Captain Martin, starting down the bridge ladder as all hands took up the chorus, with Terry and I at his heels. At the foot of the ladder he paused, and gazing at the countless thousands of birds, said: "Where there are so many birds, land can't be far off."

Night fell, inky dark. Not a sound save the occasional cry of a seabird. . . .

At some time in the night an uproar started in the forecastle. I ran forward to find the big Finn fighting a huge Irish stoker; the stoker's fellows and *Aldebaran's* deckhands were cheering the stoker; the sailing-ship men were cheering the Finn.

"Lay off! Haven't you sense enough to know it's only a matter of a little more time till this tub goes to the bottom?" I shouted, parting the combatants.

"Ye can't call no ship I'm in a tub, Mister. The Finn done that," growled the stoker, glaring at me sullen-eyed.

"Any more of this, and I'll clap you both in irons," said Captain Martin, entering as the stoker spoke. Again the giant Negro's voice came from the galley:

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter!

A smile came to Captain Martin's face. The whole mob fell to laughing and cheering. "That's the stuff, lads. If we're going to the bottom, let's go decently," said he.

"Vot vos it Captain Murphy says to us fallers in the old *Shenandoah*?" asked the big Norwegian able seaman. "Fun for all. All for vun."

"We're all in the game together, boys," said Captain Martin.

TOWARD dawn a few stars winked through the drifting mists. As two bells struck, Castledine on lookout shouted "*Land-oh!*"

By the first pale light of day we saw the loom of an island on the port beam.

"Let go both anchors, Mr. Tyler. It must be the Crozets. We're to the east of them, under the land's lee. The prevailing winds are from west. Perhaps some vessel will be sent to look for us; meanwhile if the ship should go down, we can get ashore," said Captain Martin.

"There's a chance we can get out of this under our own power, sir," said Terry; whereat Captain Martin stared at him as though thinking he had gone suddenly mad.

"It's this way, sir—" began Terry, and talked for a few minutes, concluding with: "There's no time to lose, sir. I'd suggest putting plenty of rope and some tackle into the boats and getting all hands ashore at once."

"All hands ashore, boys! Captain Tyler's in command of everything now. You'll obey his orders," said Captain Martin, as soon as ropes and tackle were in the boats.

Terry in one; Captain Martin in another, I in the third, the three boats raced for the shore. Reaching it at almost the same moment, we sprang from the boats, secured them, and started up the slope of the island—hurrying, stumbling, breathless, the firm land strange to our unaccustomed feet, Terry and I in front, with the sailing-

ship men at our heels; Captain Martin panting after us with the *Aldebaran's* people at his, all of them wondering why we should seem so wildly excited.

Coming to the ridge of the island, we saw, high and dry on the rocky beach below, the forepart of *Shenandoah*; washed there long since, no doubt, upon the crest of some high spring tide. Beside her, held fast by ropes and backstays, lay her fore lower mast, topmast, and topgallant mast with all their spars. Nearer the water were other spars, some sound, some broken.

"Come on, lads!" cried Terry, and led the way. "Come on! We'll rig a ship again and get some canvas on her!"

With seven sailing-ship able seamen and the giant Negro cook to do the skilled sailor work, and *Aldebaran's* crew of thirty-three to help with the heavy, we spent most of the morning dragging sails from the sail-locker under the old clipper's forecastle head, and getting her spars free of their tangled rigging. Then, carrying sails on their shoulders, *Aldebaran's* people, Captain Martin taking his place amongst them as though he were but any plain deckhand, hastened over the island and loaded and rowed off the boats and lifted the lost clipper's sails to her rusty steel decks, while we others dragged heavy spars to the water and set them afloat. Returning at noon, the steamer fellows lifted the lighter spars to their shoulders, and went back to the easterly beach again, helped now by the men of the clippers. We rested awhile then, and ate, and swigged down hot coffee.

"All right, lads! Let's get to the boats now!" cried Terry, when eating was done and we'd all had a few whiffs of 'baccy.

'Twas high tide. No rips swirled in the narrow passage through which long ago *Stormaløng* had raced with death at her sides. To row boats through was simple—the water so still, and no eddies. By two of the afternoon we were back in the passage again, each boat towing heavy spars, or a lower mast, or topmast.

'Twas dusk when we had the last of our lost clipper's spars on *Aldebaran's* rusty steel decks. "All right, lads! Go take a long doss now. Tomorrow we'll rig her," said Terry. With the sailing-ship men taking turns on lookout lest any wind rise, all hands lay wearily down and slept till the dawn came.

"I can give ye steam on the donkey engine, Captain Tyler, when it comes to getting your masts and spars up," said the chief engineer.

"Ah, to hell with your steam! Chanteys is the only way ye can hoist a sail or a spar!" cried *Stormaløng's* broad-shouldered Geordie, overhear-

ing; whereat Captain Martin smiled like a lad about to go walking with his first sweetheart.

All morning, and far into the afternoon, chantey after chantey rang over the still water, the *Aldebaran's* people singing for all the world as though they'd every man of them been raised in a clipper; blocks groaning, ropes creaking, canvas flapping—and Captain Martin singing with the rest of us, his bulgy eyes bright as stars, his deep voice booming over the water.

As I was a' walking down Paradise street—

sang Captain Martin, taking the solo when we went to hoisting a heavy top-sail yard upon the mast we had set securely in place, made fast to *Aldebaran's* stumpy foremast.

Waye, aye, blow the man down!

roared every man aboard, coming in on the windy chorus.

As I was a' walking down Paradise street,

sang Captain Martin, his eyes shining, his huge hands gripping the rope for all the world as though he were but a common foremast hand.

Oh, give us some time to blow the man down!

roared all hands, coming in on the chorus.

"Belay! Make that rope fast. . . . That'll do!" ordered Terry.

"Three cheers for three domned foine skippers, boys!" sang out the broad-shouldered Geordie from Tyne-side, and you should have heard the cheering of them all—sailing-ship men, steamer deckhands, stokers, engineers, Limeys, Americans, all cheering like a mob of kids on the way to the circus! And I'll swear I saw tears in Captain Martin's big bulgy eyes, despite his brushing a hand across them and muttering something about the mist getting thicker.

BY midafternoon we had two masts stepped, and the spars crossed on them, the rigging all rove, the sails sheeted home ready for setting.

"She's an altogether different-looking vessel, boys," said Captain Martin to Terry and me. "Does she look a little like one of your own ships?"

"She looks like a grand old packet, sir," replied Terry. "I've no fault to find with her anywhere."

"There's one thing, boys. To me her name doesn't sound just right. I've heard so much of *Shenandoah* and now I've seen her lying on that lonely beach. To have so much of her here, on this vessel—well, I wish we could find a new name instead of *Aldebaran* for this ship of mine," said Captain Martin.

"I think the wind's coming, sir. We'd better get those anchors in and be on our way," said Terry.

"All hands man the windlass!" I shouted.

Far over the breeze-ruffled water the anchor chantey rang, echoing along the rocky island shore, frightening the seabirds; the cables clanking in—clank, clank, clank; the sails overhead rustling, flapping gently in their gear, softly ballooning—

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, your rolling river!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I love your daughter,
Waye, aye, we're bound away across the wide Missouri!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, I'm going to court her,
Waye, aye, we're bound away across the wide Missouri!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, we've dearly bought her,
Waye, aye, you rolling river!

Oh, *Shenandoah*, we've dearly bought her,
Waye, aye, we're bound away across the wide Missouri!

With her anchors at the hawsepipes, the rising breeze in her sails, the rusty old kettle started for Capetown.

"What would you suggest as a good name for her, Captain Tyler?" asked Captain Martin.

"She's part and parcel of old *Shenandoah*," responded Terry, and asked: "Why not call her *Shenandoah's Daughter*?"

"That thought had come to me, but I'd never have ventured to voice it," said Captain Martin, and concluded: "Thank you! Ah, thank you indeed!"

DID *Shenandoah's Daughter* come to Capetown, you ask?

How else would I be here?

With her mother's great foresail, and yet greater mainsail, with her mother's storm topsails above them, and over them two wind-bellied drum-tight topgallant sails, the rusty old kettle, that now was no longer a kettle but child of the clippers, with a gale from the south at her heels, made her six miles an hour through two days and two nights. Then, not far from Capetown, the wind eased, and slowly

she crept to her anchorage—around her, great liners all shiny with paint and with varnish to gaze at her, wondering.

"Come, lads!" then called Captain Martin, looking down from his bridge to her crew—stokers, deckhands, engineers, with *Shenandoah's* able seamen amongst them, and her giant Negro cook, and the broad-shouldered Geordie, and the skinny little cockney cook of old *Stormalong*, in front of them Terry Tyler the Texas lad, and myself. "Come, lads!" he called: "Let them hear it!"

A Yankee ship came down the river, sang Captain Martin, and all hands roared out the old chorus:

Blow, boys, blow!

A Yankee ship came down the river,
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

A Yankee ship, and a Yankee clipper,
Blow, boys, blow!

A Yankee ship, and a Yankee clipper,
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

FRONTIER HEROES

A QUIZ

By Francis Drake

FRONTIER America belongs to the timeless West. Although almost obscured by the rising tide of industry and agriculture, its spirit lives on in story and song. Can you name some of its leading heroes?

A score of 70 is scouting; 80, you're riding high; 90, you're a crack shot!

1. Unknown at Braddock's defeat, he was to become America's premier scout and Indian fighter, known to all mankind.
a Sam Brady b Dick Henderson
c Daniel Boone

2. He probably had more hairbreadth escapes than any hero of the Frontier; his legends thrill thousands today.
a Simon Kenton b Steve Trigg
c John Todd

3. Raising his own men and finances during the Revolution, this man drove the British from the Northwest Territory.
a Anthony Wayne b George Rogers Clark
c George Groghan

4. One of our greatest explorers, and co-Commander of the Expedition bearing his name, he gained Louisiana Territory.
a Pierre Chouteau b Lewis Cass
c Meriwether Lewis

5. Deserting the Louisiana Expedition in Montana, he won everlasting fame by the discovery of Yellowstone Park.
a John Colter b Zebulon Pike
c Capt. Bonneville

6. First overland trader with Mexico, he blazed the celebrated Santa Fe Trail, to be followed by millions of people.
a S. R. Curtis b Wm. Becknell
c G. M. Dodge

7. A favorite scout of General Fremont, this was the first white man to look upon the Great Salt Lake in Utah.

a Joe Laramie b Lou Richards
c Jim Bridger

8. With a handful of men, this master plainsman defeated Santa Ana and won the Lone Star Republic for America.
a Sam Houston b Jim Bonham
c M. B. Lamar

9. "Be sure you are right, then go ahead," was the principle of this famous fighter—and to prove it, he went down fighting at the Alamo.
a Wm. Travis b Davy Crockett
c Steve Austin

10. With one hundred fifty Mexicans, this pioneer built a large fort on the Arkansas River to defend the traders and homesteaders.
a William Bent b Tom Tobin
c H. B. Carrington

11. Hunter, trader, trapper and Colonel of Volunteers, his life reads like a page torn from the "Arabian Nights."
a George A. Custer b Kit Carson
c Wm. Morrison

12. One of the most successful trappers in the pioneer West, his sales in one season reached the sum of \$9,000.
a Tod Randall b Tom Cosgrove
c Jim Baker

13. During the Mexican War, he won the rich region of California for us, and became a leading figure in politics.
a John C. Fremont b Phil Kearny
c William Barny

14. Forerunner of railway and airlines, this man operated a line of one hun-

dred stage-coaches, drawn by three thousand horses.

a John Brown b Benj. Holliday
c Brigham Young

15. This intrepid hero went down with one hundred eighty-four men, wielding his famous knife, at the Alamo.
a Winfield Scott b George Bent
c James Bowie

16. Captain of Sheridan's Fifty Scouts, he held hordes of Indians at bay for nine days, until relieved by U. S. Cavalry.
a Capt. Marcy b O. O. Howard
c Col. Forsythe

17. Managing the largest freighting system on the plains, he is said to have used 10,000 men and 70,000 oxen.
a Alex. Majors b John Sutter
c Senator Gwinn

18. Heading the noted Pawnee Scouts, he was the hero of hundreds of the hottest Indian battles to occur on the Border.
a E. A. Carr b Frank North
c California Joe

19. He rode from Rocky Ridge to Red Butte, 322 miles, without rest—considered the record for a Pony Express rider.
a Bob Haslam b Jack Crawford
c Wm. F. Cody

20. Perhaps the best shot on the plains, he failed as a showman, but as peace officer became the terror of Western outlaws.
a Wild Bill Hickok b Frank Purcell
c Pawnee Bill

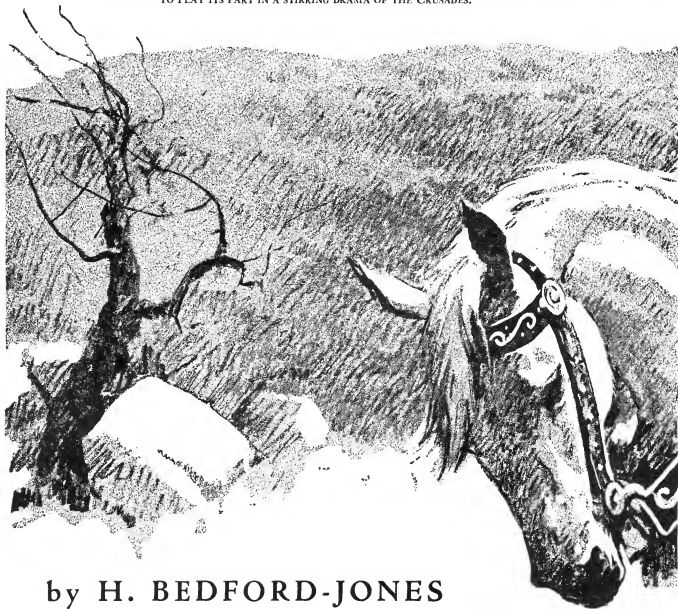
Answers

1-02	2-61	3-81	4-21	5-91
6-51	7-41	8-51	9-21	10-11
11-01	12-6	13-8	14-9	
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Leopards Are For England



THAT MALIGN AND MAGIC JEWEL THE SPHINX EMERALD COMES ON THE SCENE
TO PLAY ITS PART IN A STIRRING DRAMA OF THE CRUSADES.



by H. BEDFORD-JONES

THE man in the tent was bull-necked, of massive build yet not too short, his features alight with keen intelligence. Except for a long mustache, he was clean-shaven. The fiery energy manifest in him was amazing; yet he was ill now, and had long been ill. His voice, rapidly dictating, broke now

and again with impatience; he was a person of astounding power but scarcely of poise. He wore a single cool, armless garment that came to his knees and was ornamented with the heraldic device of a lion—the Lion of Flanders, in fact. Despite the afternoon breeze off the sea, the heat was intense and deadly.

"That will do," he concluded curtly. "Now I want Fitzalan—Sir James Fitzalan."

The two secretaries, one French, one Arab, departed. The man went to the tent entrance, wide open for air, and stared out. He was barely thirty-five, hard-muscled, alert. He looked at the sandy curve of shore a



quarter-mile distant toward the city. Tents, huts, shelters backed it; men by the hundred were in the water or lolling naked on the sand.

Moving outside a little, the man turned and gazed in the other direction. Here was a tremendous plain running into the eastern horizon, dotted here and there with trees, with

oleander bushes in gay flower, but showing hereabouts no sign of life. This was part of the historic Plain of Esdraelon, lying between Askalon and St. Jean d'Acre—a plain that had been repeatedly, from historic times, flushed with the blood of armies, the deceptively easy-looking plain that led into Palestine.

Squinting into the distance, the man found what he sought—a mere glint of light. It was there day and night, a glint that came from sun or moon on helm and shield; a pin-prick of reflected radiance, cruel and terrible, merciless emblem of Asia. This corner of naked plain was hemmed in by the united forces of all hither Asia

and Egypt. For the first time in history, the Arab people had no divisions and were united in a *jihad*, a holy war against the Christian, under one leader who was superb and unquerable.

Another man came from the horsecamp to the tent, a younger man with worn features, deep straight eyes, hollow cheeks. The armed guards saluted him; like them, he wore a small cross on the right shoulder of his mantle, tokening the Crusader. The big man in the entrance smiled; with warning, kindling gaze he took the newcomer by the arm and turned into the tent with him.

"Hold, Fitzalan! Did the swim help you?"

"It put new life into me, sire. I'm practically cured of fever, anyhow."

"A many have been cured for eternity. I have an errand for you."

"As many as Your Majesty desires."

"Oh, bosh! Stop that damned formal speech. You remind me of my Arab scribe, always prating *Melek el Anketar* at me—King of Angletreer indeed! By God, I'm Richard Plantagenet, and no fancy strutting peacock! Sit down, stretch out, be comfortable."

Fitzalan complied, smiling. Four years of war had hardened him, aged him, left him very tired and hopeless. The old fire fervor had gone long ago. He was sunk in a morass of failure, treachery, death; so were they all.

Sounds of laughter and shrill vituperation brought him erect. He looked out. A boy, detained by the guards, was furiously cursing them in French, Arabic and the *lingua franca* commonly employed by the army. King Richard was laughing heartily at the storm of oaths.

"Yusef! Be quiet!" snapped Fitzalan. "Go away. Wait for me by the shore." He resumed his seat on the cushions. "It's that confounded town boy who plays at being my esquire. A smart lad, in truth, but a nuisance at times."

The King nodded. "Aye, I heard how you saved his life and won yourself a devoted servant. You're a lucky dog, Fitzalan. Well, what news from my coat with the new arms?"

LIGHTLY Fitzalan answered: "The ladies are finishing the broidery, sire; but everyone swears the animals are weird and uncouthly. If you change your blazon from the Flanders Lion to these three nonsense creatures, your good Blondel says all the French heralds will lose their wits!"

King Richard cursed softly. Blondel was attending the Queen in the city just now. Pretending to be a minstrel, he had learned the trick. In reality he was an expert swordsman and a bodyguard.

"I know more about blazonry than all the heralds in France! So does any educated Saracen. Heraldry is purely an Eastern art; we're bringing back from the Crusades what will some day become a science. . . . Well, well, let it pass. If you're fit to ride, go find this infidel Sultan for me."

"Easily done." Surprised though he was, Fitzalan agreed impassively. "That Saracen outpost is in plain sight. Whether we seek single combat, friendly intercourse or diplomatic usage, the outpost is at our service."

THE bull-necked man grunted. "They are the polite, soft-spoken bastards—but by my father King Harry, how they can fight, eh!" He licked his lips appreciatively. Then his mood changed. The fire died from his eyes. A sad crafty expression came into his face.

"I'm sending you because I can trust no one else. Spies watch us all day and night, so be careful. Also, it may give you a chance to investigate your brother's affairs. I have only one item of instruction for you: Speak only with Saladin himself, and speak the exact truth. No lies."

A simple knight of the royal household and no herald, Fitzalan listened in growing amazement as the King went on:

"Our supplies are about done; our money's gone; no more help is coming this year. Philip of France and Austrian Leopold have gone home. I've taken Askalon and Acre from Saladin; he's taken all the inland places from me. We hold the coast; he holds Syria. For the past year we've exchanged futile letters and messages—now I want a meeting. The truce must become a definite peace to end this shabby war. I'm going home."

"England, sire?" The word trembled. Here was news with a vengeance, news to shake all Syria!

"Aye, England! I'll raise men and money at any cost, and return here later for a better try at Jerusalem. Saladin will know only that I'm leaving, and will make excellent terms to get me gone. We must meet personally; that's imperative. I'll grant any kind of conditions, though we've already charted general terms. Get him here if possible. Tell the truth as I've just put it—except that I hope to return. He'll understand what I'm after—he's a smart devil. But, mind you, don't tell the truth to another living soul, not even to the Queen!"

Fitzalan began to understand, too. These knights and lords of Syria, who had lost Jerusalem, would like King Richard to win it back for them—but all the same, they would trick him, rob him, betray him and ruin him. He knew it now.

While speaking, the King had been playing with a ring, a new one. He held it up, smiling admiringly, as Fitzalan regarded it with curiosity.

"A present; it came three days ago from Saladin. *Sala'h-ud-Din—Honoring the Faith!* Odd names these paynim bear. Well, give him his due, he's an honest fellow."

A lumpy, ill-formed, pale stone set in a gold ring. A true emerald, said Richard, who was vastly delighted with it. A messenger brought in a parchment, a mere two lines to which the royal seal had been affixed; the King gave it to Fitzalan.

"Your authority to speak for me. I must send a gift in return for this ring, too. You're for the city? Then see the Queen. Ask her to give you the jeweled dagger I took from the Persian emir at the Askalon fight, and to wrap it fittingly. Eh?"

Fitzalan assented, and picking up the boy Yusef, took his departure for Acre, the army headquarters. This seaside outpost was merely a spot where the sick could come and bathe and refresh themselves under the present truce. Richard did not get on too well with Templars, Hospitaliers, the various bishops and lords of the allied forces; and despite his vast energy was bitterly ill at times. Despondent, too, seeing the Crusade a failure for all his own victories; the outpost camp was his haven from difficulties.

FITZALAN entered the city, whose port was crammed with all sorts of vessels, and whose fine Arab palaces now housed the nobility of England, Cyprus, France and Provence. He sent the impudent, laughing Yusef home with the horses, telling him to have them ready for a daybreak ride, then sought the presence of Queen Berengaria, the slim Spanish princess whom Richard had carried off and married.

In the gay palace gardens, bright with the presence of troubadours, ladies, court officials and knights all gladly abandoned to idleness, he had no difficulty reaching the Queen, and presented Richard's request. Berengaria at once sent for the dagger and a proper wrapping.

"A gift for the Sultan, eh?" she said. "An edged gift is bad luck—but Richard would never think of that, poor man! No word of a return to England?"

"None, madam," lied Fitzalan, as he must—and the little Queen sighed. "Alas, I'd like to see England! We're well into the year 1192—must we stay here all our lives? Who is going as his embassy to Saladin?"

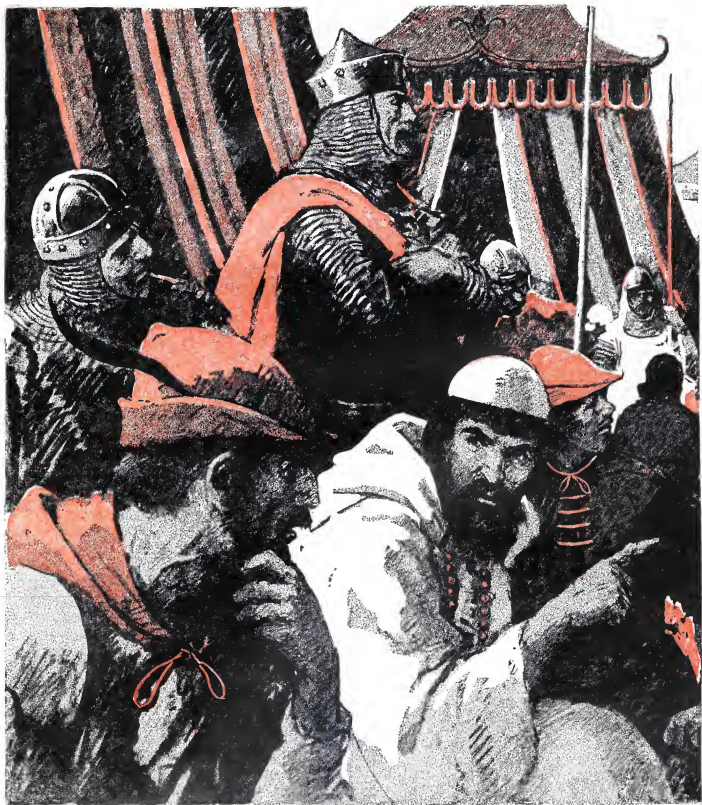
"Your Majesty, I did not ask. The King was very bright and cheerful."

"That means trouble afoot," she said shrewdly. "Here comes the pretty gaud now."



Illustrated by Maurice Bower

"I have come, Englishman, to give you what you deserve," said Sir Jean Menpes. A whip whistled and Fitzalan felt the lash sting across his face.



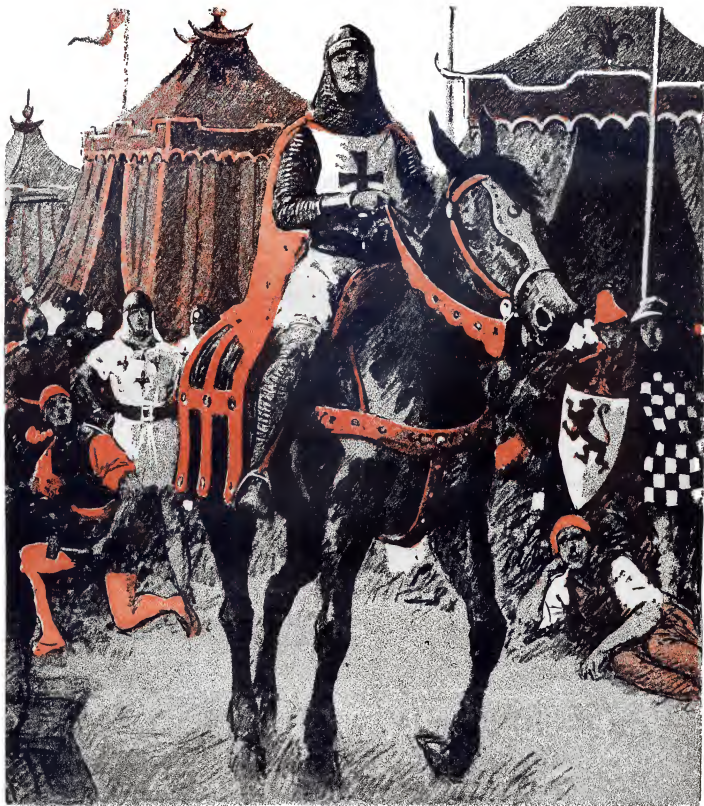
One of her ladies brought the jeweled dagger wrapped in handsome Genoa velvet, and Fitzalan made his way to his own lodgings, the sunset light upon the city. He was a little heartsick, as always when in contact with the brilliant, sad court circle that was trying to make the best of a shabby situation. Supposedly, men served the Cross in utter self-abandon; actually, they fought one another bitterly—out for anything they could get.

Finally Fitzalan rode into a ravine where an unexpected little town developed

Richard had stolen a bride in Spain, had rescued his sister Joan from unhappy marriage in Sicily and forced immense loot out of her former husband. He had taken Cyprus for himself and then sold it, plunging headlong into jealousies, treacheries and strife with other leaders of the Crusade. Personal bravery somewhat made up for these things, but only

slightly. Fitzalan could guess that the coming peace with Saladin would under its specious cloak conceal some genial rascality. Saladin would guess it too. That Saracen was a wise man, generous, able, chivalrous, outgeneraling all the Crusading kings.

He thought of this again in the pale dim dawn, when he rode out with the eager town-boy beside him, now his



—trees and water and black tents. Men appeared. Here was the Sultan himself.

esquire indeed. He wore a light helm, a light hauberk; he feared no treachery. Long Crusading years had brought Saracen and Christian together, giving them knowledge of each other, and mutual respect. Prisoners might still be slaughtered in ferocious outbursts; but in general there was a superficial veneer of chivalry and common decency.

His own affairs—this thought held Fitzalan. The Crusade had failed, and so had he. He had never found any trace of that older brother who had vanished four years ago in the fight at Ramleh. It was not from brother love alone that Fitzalan sought him, but because of the English title and estates—sordid worldly affairs, he granted bitterly.

As he rode, he chatted with the quick-witted, alert Yusef. The boy was unlike any other he knew—kings and spearmen and archers, all were weary for sight of home shores, home people, home ways. This was the fourth year in Syria. Even the kings and captains were now unspeakably weary. Richard had stuck it out longer than the others.

"Has the King given you no blazon?" the boy asked him. "You're a



"King of Angletorre indeed! I'm Richard Plantagenet, and no fancy strutting peacock!"

knight; you should have a coat of arms like the others. French knights all have them."

"He has promised, yes," Fitzalan nodded toward the sunrise. "I must learn first about my brother. If he's dead, I'll be head of the house. If he's alive, it'll be different. Keep your eye peeled for that Arab outpost. Hard to see against the sunrise."

"They say the King will marry his sister Joan to Saladin's brother," piped up the boy. "A dirty shame if he does, they all say—"

"Keep your tongue off the King's doings, or you'll get a flogging," snapped Fitzalan.

YET he felt the same himself. Everyone did. No one could tell if such a match would happen. Richard might well be weary enough to sacrifice a sister, if that would get him home again. God—to get home! That desire was now more powerful than for loot or women. There were ships and to spare, if they could but get It had become an obsession.

But being a king, Richard could not just turn around and go as the

others had done. He must, somehow, make a show of saving face. Fitzalan knew this.

"I see them now, master. They're coming," cried the little esquire.

A knot of men, dark under the sunrise, were approaching. They came nearer. Bearded men, their shields bearing odd and unknown blazonry. One rode out, saluting, and Fitzalan drew rein and spoke in the lingua franca, giving his name.

"An emissary from the King of England to Sultan Saladin. Is he anywhere near here?"

The dark man nodded. "He is camped within a three-hour ride. I'll guide you. I am the Emir Mirza."

The Saracens rode away. Mirza and one warrior rode south with Fitzalan. A pleasant, genial man, this emir, who chatted lightly as he rode. The two men were soon laughing together like old friends. The Saracens were war-weary too; Mirza made no secret of it. He had not seen his home in two years and more, nor a son born since his leaving. Very human fellows, these Saracens, just like everyone else.

THE three hours under early sun passed quickly. Fitzalan had food; Mirza had dates; they shared. They met two parties of Saracens, and finally rode into a ravine where an unexpected little town of mud houses developed, and trees, and water and farther on, black tents. Men appeared. Here was the Sultan himself.

Fitzalan was taken directly to him. A slender, arrow-straight man of fifty-five, grizzled beard, aquiline features, keen eyes. He read Richard's brief missive and nodded.

"Peace to you," he said. "Bathe, rest; later we'll eat and talk. You have good horses. Ha, a gift!"

The dagger pleased him and he slipped the chain over his head so that it hung on his chest, native style. He laughed lightly.

"I send your master an emerald that will bewitch him; he sends me a dagger—a fitting exchange! Well, sir knight, take your comfort. We have good water here."

Fitzalan and the wide-eyed Yusef were taken in hand by black men, bathed, rubbed, garbed in cool silken robes, and later brought into the black tent. The sand was covered with rich rugs and cushions. Numbers of captains were here, hard, armored fighters. Fitzalan eyed one of them amazedly, narrowly, then checked himself and settled on his cushions. Amenities and news were exchanged with his host. The latter then made blunt demand.

"You bear a message for me?"

"Aye, Lord Saladin; but not for my esquire or for your emirs."

The Saracens cleared out, taking the bragging, garrulous Yusef. Fitzalan followed the one man with his gaze—a bearded, brawny captain whose garments, under his steel-linked hauberk, were adorned with the crest of a cup in a circle. Saladin noted the look, and spoke.

"You seem interested in Firuk, my cup-bearer. You know him?"

"No, but I know his hauberk, a fine Flemish piece," said Fitzalan. "It was once worn by my brother."

He briefly mentioned his unavailing search. Then, alone, he plunged into the King's business. The older man listened, heard all the messenger had to say, then sat in thoughtful silence for a space.

"I shall never understand what the truth means to you Franks," he said at length. "Some of you respect it; others deride it. If I were to ask you something—"

At the pause, Fitzalan smiled. "The King ordered me to speak the exact truth to you, but to no one else."

"Ha! He did?" Saladin slapped his thigh and broke into quick laughter. "I see, I see! Things begin to come clear. Then let my questions wait a little. I'll put them to you

later, when we have eaten, and shall then send you back. A night ride will not be unpleasant. But let us see about that brother of yours."

He clapped his hands and sent for Firuk. The latter appeared, touched forehead, lips and chest in salute, eyed the visitor curiously, and exchanged a torrent of Arabic with his master.

"He says," translated Saladin, "that the hauberk was worn by a knight with yellow hair whom he captured at Ramleh. The infidel was badly wounded, was taken to Egypt a captive, and was later sold to the chief of a Sahara tribe. Alive? Dead? He knows not."

Fitzalan relaxed. The same old story—nothing certain.

"I thank you," he said. "Then I can do nothing."

"Perhaps I can," Saladin spoke anew with Firuk, who removed a ring from his hand and gave it over. Fitzalan recognized the worn old signet of his brother.

"Keep it as a gift, he says," Saladin went on. "Now behold! Tomorrow I send a pigeon, which reaches Cairo before evening. My vizier gets its message. In Cairo, at the end of this week, gather representatives of the Sahara tribes to renew their fealty to me. They are questioned. The answer comes to me by pigeon—you see? In two weeks I bring it with me to the meeting with your master. Do you wish to ransom your brother?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Fitzalan, astonished and delighted. Saladin, enjoying his wonder, laughed softly, and for the moment, the affair was ended.

OR was it? Fitzalan had a feeling that forces were in action which had ends unforeseen; a feeling, rather than a thought. Saladin puzzled him. Here was the Sultan of all the Muslim encamped with a few men, yet in constant touch with all parts of his vast empire. And during the frugal meal that followed, he was conscious of the interest of the emirs and captains. Why, he did not know; but they certainly discussed him.

They interested him, too. They could fight, yet had not the huge armor-breaking swords of the Crusaders. Their deadly blades were straight or curved, lithe and razor-edged. They were nimble men, quick of wit. Yusef had become a favorite among them. Watching them at prayer, one could guess them sincere and devout.

The meal over, all dispersed. Fitzalan went outside, looking at the stars. Mirza came to him.

"Later I am to accompany you back. Your horses are cared for. Give me, I pray you, your blessing."

Astonished, Fitzalan said: "You mistake; I'm no priest or holy man."

"Our master said you are the one Frank he has met who seeks nothing for himself; therefore you may be an agent of destiny and Allah. Your blessing is worth while."

Sheepishly, Fitzalan complied. Other peoples, other customs! He understood now why they had seemed interested in him. A little afterward, when they were talking alone again, Saladin said much the same thing, quite frankly.

"LET us speak the truth, my guest. If you do so, it may mean much to your people and mine. Suppose, for example, that I agree with your master to make my brother Sayf-ed-Din, Sword of the Faith, the King of Jerusalem; that he is to marry the sister of your King, who will bring him Acre as her dowry; that he is to give your people free access to the Holy City. Think you Melek el Anketar would wish such terms?"

"Yes," Amazed, delighted, Fitzalan began to see the point. Could Richard make such a peace, his failures would be all forgotten. "I think he would."

"And would your emirs and bishops all swear obedience to a peace on such terms?"

"Our English barons, yes. The Templars, Hospitallers and Syrian bishops—no. Not unless your brother were to become a Christian."

Saladin broke into amused laughter. "Then your King talks for all Christians—but in actual reality I deal with him for himself and his army alone, eh?"

Fitzalan assented grudgingly, but the Sultan seemed delighted.

"Good! An understanding is excellent. I see why he sent you. He is an honest man. He knows the value of truth in a world of rascals. Others in your armies seek to bribe me with gold. He bribes me with the truth. By Allah, I like that man! We shall get on. I am sorry now that I sent him the emerald."

"He is overjoyed with it."

"No. Warn him. It will bewitch him." Saladin shook his head earnestly. "It is an old, famous, very evil jewel. It bewitches its owners."

Fitzalan did not argue the matter. It was now arranged that in two weeks Saladin should come to the camp outside Acre and meet Richard. Details of the escort were settled. All war was to be ended for a term of three years. A remarkable belt and straight sword, its hilt of massive carved gold, was presented to Fitzalan as a token of his host's appreciation, and the audience was finished.

Ten minutes later he and the boy Yusef were riding with Mirza under the stars. Seeking his chance, Yusef drew close and spoke in French softly to Fitzalan:

"Master, there was another Frank in that camp, a man from Acre. He has been there two days, I learned, but kept himself hidden from you. They say he was sent by the Templars to arrange financial matters dealing with tributes paid and prisoners to be ransomed."

Curious, thought Fitzalan. That was what Saladin had meant by mentioning attempts to bribe him. The matter slipped from his mind. It was none of his affair.

Mirza, as though following some unscen road, led him straight across the plain to the seaside camp. It was past midnight when Fitzalan passed the sentries. Following orders, he asked for the King and was taken to the royal pavilion. Lights sprang up. Richard, a cloak flung about him, came into the outer tent and embraced him with a bear-hug.

"You didn't reach him already—and back again? Magnificent! I'll order some wine; then we'll be alone. You had luck, eh?"

"The best," said Fitzalan, and said no more until the wine was brought and they were in private. He noted that Richard still wore the emerald ring. Then he got into his story, related everything in detail, and did not forget the curious warning of Saladin about the emerald. At this, Richard laughed heartily.

"Bewitch me? Not likely. He wants it back, that's all. Wait till I show you its secret. . . . But go ahead!"

Fitzalan complied. He spoke of his own affairs and showed the signet Firuk had given up. The King sat in a glow of utter delight, examined the gift sword, gulped his wine.

"Lucky man indeed! You've won the Sultan's favor—you must sit in the peace conference. Here, take the emerald to the lamplight, examine the figure inside the stone. Can you see it? A Sphinx, a very Sphinx, utterly exact!"

"What's a Sphinx?" queried Fitzalan, to whom the word was new.

"Look and see. A monument of ancient Egypt—lion body, man head. Whether it be magic or no, it's a marvel! And more," Richard added, "the emerald itself is tonic to the mind. Sharpens the wits, they say; I find it true. This jewel may bewitch some folk, but gazing into it provokes great thoughts of high enterprise. Ah, I love the stone!"

NO use going on to the city at this hour, said the King. Stay here, take a couch in the tent, and enjoy a morning swim later. Fitzalan complied. He told Yusef to turn in the horses with those of the King and be ready to go into Acre on the morrow.

Morning brought details—letters from Cyprus, business to handle with the Venetians; Richard kept him busy

following his early swim. When by afternoon he was ready to leave, Yusef had disappeared. He thought nothing of it. Sometimes the boy was gone for days at a time.

Before leaving camp, he did have a good look at the emerald in full sunlight, and it astonished him. The tiny Splinx-figure stood out distinct and clear, and there was no way for it to have been inserted in the stone. It was a true freak of nature. So upon this he had his horses saddled, and rode into Acre.

NO sign of Yusef here. During the next three days, Fitzalan was harried by important duties, securing contracts with half a dozen shipowners on behalf of the King, for sailing in a month's time. The Queen and court ladies had to be secured passage first of all, then lesser women, and the chief barons and captains. All these could clance the passage home via France; but whether or not Richard could, was not so sure. For him France might be unsale.

Inevitably, word spread of a coming return to England. Possibly, said the King; it depended on whether a peace was effected. Since Fitzalan alone knew of the broad gold coin paid over, nobody was certain of Richard's intent, but rumors flew and excitement rose. And then, without warning, the boy Yusef turned up in ghastly fashion.

During this time Fitzalan had been increasingly aware of scowls and mutters. It was different when he met a French knight he knew well, and heard an angry oath.

"Perchance, monsieur, you are displeased?" he said, halting.

"With friends of heathen Saracens, yes," snapped the Frenchman. "Your ragged, comic esquire has hinted at your doings. A fine sword you're wearing—no doubt it came from England!"

Fitzalan let the sarcasm pass, let the quarrel go; abruptly uneasy, he pushed the query about Yusef and was told to visit the quay of Genoa. He went straight on to the quays, saw a crowd at the wharf of the Genoa galleys, and pushed through to find the boy Yusef just picked out of the water, dead, cut badly, a knife still in him. Fitzalan took the knife, examined it, gave orders about the body. Little grief shook him, but hot anger did. On the way home he met an official of the Hospitallers, halted him, displayed the knife, told whence it had come.

"Here in the wooden haft is burned the name of Menpes," he added. "I accuse Sir Jean Menpes as the murderer of my esquire. Since he is one of your knights, I ask justice."

"Ask and be damned," said the Hospitaller. "You're half a Saracen

yourself. The boy told plenty. Go ask your friend Saladin for justice!"

Fitzalan, amazed and aghast, hotly sought advice from the King's chamberlain, who threw up his hands and groaned in despair.

"You can't bring such a charge against a knight of the Hospital! The King? He would back you in hot fury. That's what they want—an end to all amity, to all his plans—"

"And I'm to let my retainers be butchered with impunity?" snapped Fitzalan.

"If you're a great man enough to control yourself, yes. Good God, don't you know the gossip that's going around? You make secret visits to the Saracen camp, receive gifts from the Sultan—in a word, you're a recreant knight and no Christian! That's the rumor."

"Bosh!" Fitzalan was white to the lips with rage. "All done on the King's service!"

"Aye. Prove it. Let Richard come barging in, raising hell, starting a new and more savage feud with the French, with the Hospital—that's what they want! Man, we can't afford it now. Suffer in peace, for God's love!"

Fitzalan understood at last, and suffered with infuriated meekness. Yusef had been caught, tortured for information, killed. He himself was under deep suspicion—that Frank hidden in the Saracen camp had caused it all. Appeal to the King would bring instant justice. Richard would come charging into Acre like a mad bull—to what good? Another and more bitter quarrel would be under way. The Hospitallers wanted it, hoped to provoke it.

"I'll bear with it," he said at last, "for the greater good. If I can."

The days brought him ostracism, except among the English; taunts, open sneers, insults—treatment unendurable by any knight. He endured silently, kept to himself, and inwardly grew white-hot in fury. Richard had strictly forbidden private quarrels.

The situation would have drawn wide attention, but now news of the peace conference was spread, and this overwhelmed all lesser events. Saladin was coming with his emirs and relatives and captains—coming to make peace! False rumors sped on eager wing. Excitement lifted every heart. Home! Home again, the war ended!

Twice, attending the King out at the shore camp, Fitzalan saw the big emerald, saw Richard sitting gazing at it as though indeed bewitched, and wondered. He was so choked by his own bottled-up fury, however, as to give scant attention. Richard was wearing the fine mantle on which the court ladies had embroidered his new arms—three leopards, it was said. Since no one had ever seen a leopard,

many fantastic heraldic arguments arose, to the vast amusement of the King.

Fitzalan had new duties that kept him busy, in preparing for the coming guests. Saladin was bringing a hundred of his chosen captains; Richard was choosing an equal number of his own knights, with the Grand Masters of the Temple and Hospital, to receive them. Pavilions had to be made ready, horse lines prepared, servants instructed, protocol settled by the heralds—a world of details.

In the midst of all, with the arrivals due on the morrow, Fitzalan came late to his lodgings in town. He dismounted, entered the courtyard, and was aware of a dark figure by the gate lantern. He heard his name called.

"Yes?" he said, turning. Then he saw who the visitor was.

"I have come, Englishman, to give you what you deserve," said Sir Jean Menpes. A whip whistled, and Fitzalan felt the lash sting across his face.

That loosed the gates. Forgetful of all knightly courtesy, aware only of the uncontrollable fury at last set free, Fitzalan stepped forward and his fists smashed in twice—terrible blows with his full weight in them, crude peasant blows, knuckles sinking into bony face. The man with the whip collapsed under those crashing fists and lay quiet.

Fitzalan went on into his lodgings, slightly appeased, but when morning came he saw that the red weal of the whip would not come from his face. He was marked. And this day Saladin would arrive—this very morning. With a shrug, he shaved and dressed, and rode out of town to the camp, and said nothing to anyone about the mark on his face.

SALADIN and his retinue arrived, before the hot noonday. What with drums and trumpets, Richard in his gorgeous scarlet mantle with the golden leopards, the famous Saracen knights and lordly Crusaders, the slim graceful figure of Saladin, heralds and troubadours, the camp was a bedlam. No women, of course, were here—the presence of even the Queen would have affronted Arab notions. Guests were shown to quarters, horses were taken care of, and the deadly enemies made a fine pretense of fellowship.

With Richard, who took Saladin in his eager personal charge, the fellowship was very real. He was absorbed in his guest, and Fitzalan had no difficulty in keeping out of his way and his regard. Hawks had been brought, and Richard was very keen about hawking; the birds and their keepers were given into Fitzalan's charge and when, in mid-afternoon, he was abruptly summoned to the royal tent, he supposed it was on this business.

He found Richard and Saladin in eager talk; Blondel, the minstrel-swordsmen, and half a dozen others were at a little distance, while crowds surged through the adjoining pavilions. This was a purely social gathering. Business would come tomorrow.

"Ha, Fitzalan—this way!" cried the King. "Our guest has asked for you!"

Fitzalan approached and saluted. The King's words had provoked a general stir of interest. Saladin smiled.

"A promise is an obligation, my friend," he said. "I brought the news as I foretold. It is not, I fear, good news. The man in question died two years ago. My secretary will give you the message to this effect."

Fitzalan thanked him; then he observed that the forehead of Richard was darkening with a flush of passion—in Richard this was a sure sign of threatening outbreak.

"What is this?" asked the King abruptly. "Your face is marked, Fitzalan. Explain it. Speak out. By my father King Harry, let's have the reason!"

In a flash, Fitzalan saw that Richard knew everything and had deliberately chosen this moment for a clearance. But it was a bad moment.

"A drunken assassin in the city last night, sire," he said lightly. "I punished him as he deserved. It was too dark to see his identity."

"So?" Perhaps Richard took warning. His gaze was stormy. Then he lifted his hand and for an instant his eyes were fastened upon the emerald. "I promised," he went on slowly, "to give you a blazon. Now that your brother is dead, you are the head of your house, so wear a leopard. Leopards are for England, or shall be. Take a leopard—my brother, you know this animal, no doubt?" He turned to Saladin, touching the leopards on his mantle.

"I do not," said Saladin, "but I shall be honored in learning from your lips. Is it an English animal?"

"No, a famed beast of far countries," said Richard. "According to the tales of travelers, a leopard is begotten in spouse-breach between the lion and the fabulous pard, and we have no exact description. Therefore we give him the aspect of his sire, as is most probable, and distinguish him from the lion by showing him full-face, gazing sideways at the beholder, a lion being usually shown in profile."

"A new animal in blazonry," said Saladin with interest. "And with your permission, may I not add a touch to the arms you give this knight? With the leopard, then, let him wear in memory of our friendship a star, drawn in whatever fashion may please your custom."

"Good! Be it so, Fitzalan!" exclaimed Richard, whose brow had cleared again.

Fitzalan was rendering the proper thanks, when a slight commotion took place outside. Blondel, a lute in his hand, stepped quickly closer to the King, his eyes vigilant. A chamberlain in some flurried haste appeared and bawled forth an announcement.

"Your Majesty, the Grand Master of the Order of the Hospital has arrived to greet Your Majesty's distinguished guest."

"Ha! An unexpected courtesy," said Richard dryly. "Let him enter."

THE Grand Master was entering, a half-dozen of his knights with him, clanking in full mail. Richard's forehead was looking angry again; the proud hauteur of this distinguished order was not to his taste. Yet Fitzalan was puzzled to observe his evident effort at self-control. It was as though the King knew of threatening danger and, for once, was trying to fend it off instead of meeting it bull-fashion.

When among the party Fitzalan saw the figure of Sir Jean Menpes, with face bandaged, he scented trouble brewing, and withdrew to the side of Blondel, who gave him a swift, significant look. However, the knights saluted Richard as usual, gave Saladin friendly greeting, and the Grand Mas-

ter spoke in smooth polished Arabic. All the while, Fitzalan noted, the King was fixedly looking down at the ring on his hand. It sharpened the wits, he had said. He had need of that emerald now, if ever.

Saladin spoke courteously, firmly, hinting at the desire for peace which had brought him here. He finished. The Grand Master made brief reply, then turned to Richard.

"It grieves me, Your Majesty," he said in French, "that I am compelled to seek justice at your hands, yet knowing your strong desire for equity I am confident it will be granted gladly."

Richard gave him the lion's look, threatening much.

"You are right," he replied. "But I know not the form of your complaint."

The Grand Master motioned to Sir Jean Menpes.

"One of your knights, Majesty, only last night made a strange assault with his bare hands upon this excellent gentleman of the Order, and indeed struck him senseless. Therefore I must seek from your justice a meeting between the two, in the fashion usual to knights and gentlemen."

"One moment," said Richard quietly. "Of your kindness—a moment."

In the silence, every eye except his own went to Fitzalan; but Richard was looking again at the emerald on his hand, as though seeking in the green stone some advice and counsel. So, perhaps, he was.

The purpose of this visit was now evident enough, at least to Fitzalan. Single combat between himself and Menpes—and beyond this the murder charge. Could the lion-fury of Richard be aroused, a delimit breach would be made, all negotiations might well fall through; it was only too certain, in the usual course of events, that Richard would fly to the defense of his own people with a tremendous and unrecking fury. But, as he now gazed upon the emerald, the King was slightly smiling.

"Who is this knight of mine whom you accuse?" he asked.

"Sir James Fitzalan, Your Majesty." The King looked up, looked at Menpes, and asked a question.

"Your Grand Master, who is our beloved friend and most honored ally, has stated your case, Sir Jean Menpes. I do not suggest that he is wrong. Still, error is possible to anyone, and therefore I ask whether you support his charge."

Menpes bowed as well as his armor would let him.

"Absolutely, Your Majesty. Every word which he has uttered is the exact truth."

"Good. Let all present remember the charge," said the King. "Sir James Fitzalan, I should like to hear

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what you have to say regarding this matter. The leopards are for England, so it seems to me that exact justice is necessary."

The leopards are for England—the words, the look accompanying them, struck deep meaning into Fitzalan's mind. A hint: The important thing was getting away for England. Nothing else mattered. Exact justice—was it possible that the lion had turned to a smooth craft as cunning as that of the Grand Master?

"It is very simple, sire," said Fitzalan. "The entry to my lodgings is dark. As I returned there last night, someone waiting there assaulted me with a wild cry—assaulted me, not as a gentleman, but as a footpad. So I knocked him senseless and went on to my rooms. Naturally I could not, either then or now, make use of the weapons of a knight against a mere footpad in the night."

Quickly, so quickly as to show that he meant to give the enemy no time, Richard spoke up. He seemed vastly amused.

"This is a very odd mistake! Evidently it is a mistake, as you must all admit. Fitzalan's face bears the mark of assault. A senseless man could not have struck the blow, so it is obvious that he was the first assaulted. Nor could he draw sword upon a footpad, as he says. Any man, gentle or ig-

noble, who makes an assault in the dark forfeits all his rights to the customs of chivalry and knighthood, including those of judicial combat. As we have today met in gentle chivalry toward all enemies, I admonish Fitzalan to forget this mistaken charge upon the part of Sir Jean, who evidently suffers from error, perhaps from too much wine. So, my honored Grand Master, since it is evident that no knight of your noble Order could play the part of footpad, it were best to pass over all charges."

Smoothly said, silkily said—why, here was a new and novel Richard! And he had the Hospitallers where he wanted them. Menpes dared not mention the whip, dared not admit he had been lying in wait. The Grand Master, having failed to provoke the lion's wrath, was helpless. That weak across Fitzalan's face had conquered him. His whole attack had missed fire.

Bowing to the King, he accepted defeat gracefully and withdrew from a very bad situation, taking his knights with him. The King beckoned Fitzalan, and held up his hand to display the ring.

"You see? It counseled me, sharpened my wits, as I told you it did," he said. "Are you satisfied or do you wish to press matters to an end?"

"Sire, I am more than satisfied," said Fitzalan. "I am delighted. I

did not know Your Majesty was aware of all the events."

"I keep informed," said Richard, brusquely, and he turned to Saladin. "Tomorrow we'll make that peace treaty, eh? Everything is settled except the length of the peace."

"I think," said the Sultan, his eyes twinkling, "that three years should be long enough. My relatives, my emirs, all will swear to keep the peace—and you shall find that the Muslim keep their oaths."

"Yes," said Richard. "Some Christians I know might take a lesson from them. Well, tomorrow sees it done, then."

The morrow saw it done. What is more—and mentioned with the greatest astonishment by the Arab chroniclers—was that the morrow saw Saladin and Richard exchange a hearty English handclasp upon the terms of the treaty.

NOT that this mattered. Before the English army was over the sea horizon, the peace was smashed to flinders—and not by Saracen violators either. But what of that? The emerald had departed upon its curious way, to be lost in English fogs and laid away and forgotten, until another king remembered it and brought it forth to later adventure.

Like the leopards, the emerald was now for England—temporarily at least.

Coming Next Month!

QUARTER HORSE by Gordon Young

A boy and his racehorse, in a not-soon-forgotten novel of the real West by the author of "The Iron Rainbow."

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A moving drama of the North Pacific today, by the author of BLUE BOOK successes like "The Promised Land" and "The Final Splendor," and the recent novel "Andromeda," which critics hail as the best writing about the sea since Joseph Conrad.

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Mr. Honey's next adventure in transmigration finds him with a job as herdsman on an ancient Chinese dragon ranch.

DOUBLE TROUBLE FOR PAT PENDING by Nelson Bond

Wherein Pat breaks out with an invention even more than marvelous.

AN EMERALD FOR KING EDWARD by H. Bedford-Jones

In the reign of England's Edward III, the Sphinx Emerald again plays a dramatic rôle.

BEHIND THE GOTHIC LINE by Lt. Comdr. Richard M. Kelly

The author himself was involved in this mission of the OSS Maritime Unit in Italy.

AND MANY OTHERS

Illustrated by
Stuart Hay



It all happened because Portia was a very special pig, with a very special thirst that few other barflies could achieve.

In a Pig's Whistle

by RICHARD GLENDINNING

LET it be understood right from the start that I am not the mad, impetuous sort who is trying to rush Gussie off her feet. If she does not like short engagements, as she tells me most emphatically on the phone, that is all right by me; but, as I tell her when I can get a word in, I do not consider that marriage after twelve years of engagement is so abrupt as to cause a general lifting of eyebrows all over town. Then I tell her I will definitely not wait another twelve years while she is making up her mind, and with that, she hangs up her phone.

It is later, while I am thinking how long to give her, that my only customer, a long gent in a cutaway, says: "Another libation, bartender."

Right then is when I should of spot him for a dead beat, but do I? I do not; my mind is on Gussie instead of business, so I guess I have no one but me to blame for the way things turned out. I wipe off the bar in front of him, make him another of what he's having, and then absently begin to pound the ice down in the

cooler with a sawed-off baseball bat, still with my mind on Gussie.

The next thing I know, this fellow is saying: "Good host, I fear I am financially embarrassed and am quite unable to pay my bill."

Ah-hah! I think. *Jerry Bolton, you are one big dope to be taken in by a cutaway.* I lean on the bar and stare into this gent's watery blue eyes. "That is most unfortunate, chum," I tell him, "but you are into me for a buck-fifty, a sum I cannot afford to toss through a window." This is especially true since Gussie does not miss the chance to tell me on the phone that I am a poor business man.

I do not know if it is my over-six-feet in height, or the short bat I am holding, or my red hair, which is usually a sign of great temper, but whichever it is, this gent goes into the shakes, begs forgiveness, promises me a great fortune at a future date and winds up by offering me the coat in payment.

"Not on your life," I say to him. "Only sandwich men wear such coats, and I am a long way from carrying signs about the public streets."

A lump rises in his throat; a sad look creeps into his eyes; and he reaches down to the floor beside him. When he straightens up, he has a burlap sack which he sets on the bar in front of me and says: "My good man, here is my greatest possession. I offer it to you."

Naturally, I am curious as to the contents of the bag.

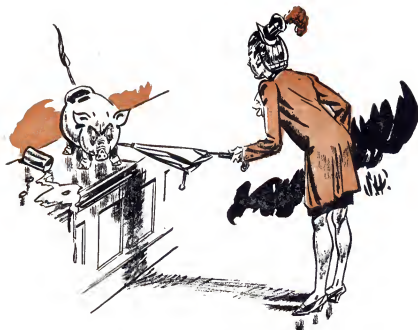
"What is this thing?" I ask.

"A pig. . . . No, not a pig but a loyal friend, my only friend."

"What do I want with a pig?" I point to the lettering on the front window, and I read it to him, since it is backwards from where he stands. "That sign says, 'Jerry Bolton's Bar and Grill' and nowhere does it mention a butcher-shop."

"This is not the usual pig," he states, and with that, he loosens the drawstring, reaches into the sack and drags forth by the hindlegs a very small pig. "Ah, yes," he says, "this is a most unusual pig."

I agree with him there; it is indeed an unusual pig. Instead of squealing, it remains very quiet and looks up at



"Scat!" Gussie screeches. "Scat the devil off of there, you pig."

me with sad, drooping eyes; then it looks at the gent in the cutaway, rolls its eyes and nuzzles up against his arm. This pig is no bigger than a quite young baby, and is as pink as a parking-ticket. Its feet are well manicured, but the most unusual thing about this pig is that its tail has no kink in it; it is as straight and stiff as a setter's without hair.

"There you are, sir. She is yours."

THE pig turns to me with a forlorn look as if begging for mercy. "No," I say, "I can't do it. She seems to be very fond of you, and I would be busting up a beautiful thing."

"I insist. Here—" He pushes the pig toward me. I push it back at him.

I want nothing to do with this pig, since I am not familiar with how to take care of it; nor is it the kind of thing I can ring up in the cash register. It strikes me that it will be nothing but a nuisance, probably requiring special food and extra expense, and all in all considered, not a smart deal from a business point of view—an important consideration when I remember what Gussie thinks. "No," I say to him, "I do not want her, so forget your bill and scam before I get mad."

This fellow is stubborn. "Let me show you something about this pig. . . . Do you have a nickel?" Why, I don't know, but I give him a nickel. He goes to the juke-box, puts in the nickel and pushes a button. In a moment the room is filled with trumpet all requesting "Don't Fence Me In." At the first note, the pig's eyes pop wide open, her head coos to one side, and then, without further ado, she hops nimbly from the bar, pats quickly across the room and slides under a table, where she lies with her

snout close to the floor and her feet clapped over her ears. "She will stay there until another record is played," this gent informs me, "but Portia does not really care for any juke-box music."

"Portia?" I ask.

"Portia is her name. Portia, the pig with a soul! She is a very sensitive pig, I assure you. Do you know that she refuses to leave the city limits for fear she might meet a country sausage? She won't come near anyone wearing pigskin gloves or carrying a pigskin wallet. Footballs repel her; the sound or smell of bacon frying is enough to turn her pale and wan, and she was beside herself with joy when she learned that someone had invented nylon bristles."

From what he says, I can see right off that Portia is certainly a sensitive pig, but it is also clear that she is a problem pig, and as such has no place in a bar and grill. This I tell her master, but he will not take no for an answer. With big tears running down his cheeks, he says: "You must take her and give her a fine home, because mine is not the life for her. Just see how low I have fallen, when I am willing to exchange my best friend for demon rum."

He has a point there, and I say: "Well—" From that moment, I am lost.

He reaches across the bar and grips my arm. "God bless you, kind sir!" he whispers, all choked up. "Let me go without a backward glance, and if she wonders, tell her I have stepped down to the corner for a cigar." With his shoulders squared, his head thrown back, and the tails of his cutaway flapping bravely like regimental colors going into battle, he walks out the

door, never to return, leaving me with a sensitive pig on my hands.

"Portia," I call somewhat testily. "Oh, Portia, come on out." But she does not hear me; her feet are still over her ears while "Don't Fence Me In" is playing. I go about my business and draw myself a short one; then I do some thinking, something I should've done much earlier. Clearly, Gussie will think poorly of this transaction, having no particular regard for pigs and considering them rather nasty personally. In addition, there is no telling what Gussie will think about a pig who is stupid enough to have a sensitive soul, thus causing itself all kinds of anguish at the drop of a suitcase.

So deeply engrossed am I in these thoughts, that I do not see a customer come in until he says: "Draw one."

I do this in my usual way. Since I do not believe in Coney Island beers in my place, I fill the glass carefully so there is only a small head. I am about to knock this head off, when the juke-box clicks, meaning that "Don't Fence Me In" is over, and Portia crawls out from under the table. She trots across the room, hops up on a bar stool and watches me critically. At this, the customer who is waiting for his beer rubs his eyes, blinks them hard several times, then glances at Portia again.

"Hah-hah!" he laughs. "I would have sworn for a moment that I saw a pig sitting there on that stool."

"You did. Meet Portia."

He looks again, then, very quietly, says: "Oh. . . . How d'ya do?"

Introductions over, I go back to work and am about to tip the glass to get rid of the suds when I am aware that Portia is staring hard at me, and is firmly shaking her head from side to side. "What's wrong with you?" I ask.

"She don't want you to do something," this customer says.

"I can see that, but what shouldn't I do?"

He goes over to Portia and says: "What shouldn't he do?" Whereupon she pokes her snout at my hand and shakes her head again. Naturally, I am somewhat stymied by all this, because I do not know what I am doing wrong. "Maybe she thinks you're wasting beer," the customer says. Well, the customer is sometimes always right, so I oblige by knocking the head into a saucer, and I look at Portia to see whether I am doing right. Apparently I am, because her tail wags stiffly and her snout crinkles into what is much like a smile; she hops up on the bar and begins to down the contents of the saucer. This convinces me that Portia is a very stupid pig, because, as anybody knows, the suds are far from being the best part of the beer.

"Well, I'll be a—" The customer drinks his beer in a hurry, leaving the sentence hanging, and slaps a handful of change on the bar. I am about to reach for the right amount when my hand is suddenly knocked out of the way by Portia's snout. She studies the mixed change for a moment, then daintily paws a dime from the pile and pushes it to me, at which point the customer's chin drops and begins to tremble on his chest. But Portia is not through. She trots back to the change, removes a penny and nods toward her empty saucer. "Now wait a minute," the customer says, real angry-like. "I come in here in good faith to buy a drink for me, but not to set them up for *her*!" He stomps out in a huff, and I say a few harsh words to this stupid pig who is losing me customers.

But there is one consolation I have. Feed-bills for Portia will be practically nothing if she only needs a little beer to keep her going. I fill her saucer again; she thanks me with a nod, and goes at that beer as if she hadn't eaten for a week.

I am studying her thoughtfully when the phone rings; it is Gussie.

"Jerry," she says, "I have been thinking about keeping you waiting, and you are right. Twelve years is about as much as the traffic will bear, so—"

"Portia, stop that!" I yell, observing her in the act of nudging the tap with her snout. She stops immediately and crawls into the crook of my arm.

"Who is Portia?" Gussie wants to know, her voice sharp as a knife.

"Portia's having quite a time," I say. "She is up on the bar drinking beer, and now she is trying to crawl into my arms."

It turns very chilly at Gussie's end of the line. "Ummm! So that's the way you carry on when I'm not around to keep tabs on you?"

"You've got it wrong, Gussie," I protest. "Portia is nothing but a stupid pig."

"Of that I'm sure, you trifler with a woman's heart!"

PORTIA slithers away from me and stands on her head in the pretzel-bowl. I began to laugh at this, it being the first time I ever witness a pig standing on her head in a pretzel-bowl, and it strikes me as being quite funny. But Gussie apparently has little sense of humor. "What is so funny now, you worm?" she asks.

"Portia got away from me," I explain. "Now she is standing on her head, kicking up her heels and wagging her tail."

At this Gussie grows strangely angry and begins to sputter in my ear. "You—*you—oh!* All I have to say is it's a good thing that I learned your true nature in time before rushing into anything with my eyes closed."

"Now wait a minute, Gussie. It's really nothing. Some stranger left Portia here to live with me, and—"

"You call that *nothing*? I'm coming over there, and if that—that creature isn't gone when I arrive, I'm going to—" She slams down her phone and sets my ear to ringing.

"Portia," I say sadly, "I do not understand women as much as I should." Portia replies by knocking over a shot glass and lapping up the rye from the bar. Almost immediately she breaks into a series of cartwheels, back-flips and somersaults, leaving me to wonder about her earlier training. Finally, the only way I can curb these acrobatics is to put ten nickels in the juke-box so that Portia will spend a long time under the table during the playing of "Don't Fence Me In."

I use this time for serious thinking, and I suddenly hit upon an idea. Under the bar I find three stone crocks which are for pickles and the like, and have been hanging around since the free-lunch days. On one I print "PORTIA'S BEER," and on another, "PORTIA'S WHISKY." The third one I label, "PORTIA'S SANDWICHES." It is my theory that I will put all leftovers into the proper crock, and when Gussie sees this good business sense, she will not be so harsh on me or Portia. As an afterthought, I find another crock on which I print in big letters, "PORTIA'S HANGOVER." At the time, I am not certain if pigs are bothered that way, but it seems likely to me that Portia will be, since she is such a sensitive pig.

After I am through with these preparations, I forget about Portia for a time, because I become very busy when the reporters from the Evening *Star* come whooping and hollering in the door like kids dashing

into a drugstore after school. These gentlemen of the fourth dimension brook no delay in getting their afternoon tiffin, so I find myself running back and forth behind the bar like a bird-dog on a hot scent. Suddenly I am aware of a certain silence which can only mean that my nickels have run out in the juke-box. Becoming desperate, I reach across the bar and press a coin into Charley Rasmussen's hand. "Old pal," I say to him, "please let's hear 'Don't Fence Me In.'"

HE looks at me as if my senses and I have been separated, and says, "I thought you didn't like that song!" "I didn't—but I suddenly do," I hedge, not caring to tell a reporter anything more than is necessary:

"Well, I don't know," he says, seeing the chance to plunge the needle into me very deeply. "Let's put it to a vote." He yells, "How many want to hear 'Don't Fence Me In'?"

Only two or three say they do; the rest very loudly say they don't.

"Well, that's that," Charley says as he hands back my coin with a laugh. I do not join in with him, since I consider it to be a sad moment.

"Hey, Jerry," Luke Tallmadge calls during a short lull, "what're those crocks you've got lined up?"

"They are Portia's. She eats from them."

There is a heavy silence, broken only by the stem of a cocktail glass snapping. Softly, Luke asks: "W-who is Portia?"

"Portia is a stupid pig," I explain, and then, in order to clarify this point, I add: "She has a sensitive soul."

"Where is Portia now?"

"She should be under the corner table." All heads turn toward the corner table and then swing back to



Those drinks hit Portia fast and hard . . . she turns three swift somersaults.

me; the expressions on the long line of faces are accusing, but sympathetic.

"You should leave it alone for a while," Charley advises me. "Next thing you know, you'll be telling us you really have a doll named Portia who sleeps under the table and eats out of those crocks."

"I tell you that Portia is nothing but a pig. She dances on the bar, stands on her head in the pretzel-bowl, drinks anything offered and makes the customers pay for her drinks."

THIS statement is greeted with such a loud gullaw from one and all that I began to wonder if they are not right. Maybe there is no such thing as a Portia; maybe I am dreaming it all up. This strikes me as being a good thing until I remember Gussie. She is the doubting kind, and if I do not produce a pig named Portia for her to observe, there is no question in my mind but what she will believe the worst, which is none too good. With my heart crawling up and down my throat like a yo-yo on a string, I go around in front of the bar and search under all the tables. Portia is under none of them; nor is she hiding behind the juke-box; in fact, she is nowhere that I can see. Finally, in sheer desperation, I look in the porter's closet where the pails, brooms and mops are kept.

There is Portia. She is curled up dejectedly beside the mop-pail.

"Ah-hah!" I say to myself and go back behind the bar.

"Well?" Charley asks.

Luke says: "Did you find her?" And from the expressions on their faces, all the rest of them were wondering the same thing.

"I did. She is hiding in the dark in the porter's closet."

"That is a funny place to hide," one of the reporters says.

"Won't she come out at all?" another wants to know.

Luke shakes his head and says: "It is strange that she won't face gentlemen such as us. Doesn't she realize that newspaper men are very uncritical of people, no matter how low they have fallen?"

"Portia," I call, "come out, little pig."

When the *Star* boys hear me talk this way to Portia, they are very shocked indeed. "That's no way to call her," Charley says. "She is entitled to some respect, even from a publican." In a very soft voice, he coos: "Portia—oh, Por-tia! Come out, dear Por-tia." This strikes the others as a good way to call her too, and they all join in with Charley and make a regular chant of it. It seems to me to be a peculiar way to call a pig, especially when there is so much talk about the way they call hogs in Arkansas.

"You are going about this the wrong way," I tell them. "There is only one way to get Portia out here." I take a small bottle from a drawer behind the bar and dump some of its contents into one of the crocks, the one marked "PORTIA'S HANGOVER." "She has been mixing her drinks," I explain to the customers, as I pour a glass of water into the crock and step back to see what happens.

No sooner did that mixture begin to fizz in the crock than I see something that could only be Portia's snout poking out of the porter's closet. The next thing I know, there is a pink streak, like the tail of a fiery comet, zipping across the room and Portia lands *ka-plunk* on the bar, her four feet braced as she comes to a skidding stop; then she begins to lap up that Fizzo-Seltzer like crazy. When she is finished, she squats back and eyes the newspaper gents one by one, as if looking for one special face.

Charley Rasmussen is the first one who can get his tongue under control; the rest of them can't even get their mouths closed. "I—I don't believe it!" Charley yells. "I *can't* believe it—otherwise I will have to go on the wagon as of right now."

Portia pats along the bar and stands in front of him. She is very angry; she slaps the bar with her left front foot, then points at the hangover crock with her stiff tail. Suddenly I see what she wants of Charley. "Put some money on the bar," I tell him. This he does. Portia takes a penny, pushes it to me, and goes to the end of the bar to lie down.

FOR the next fifteen minutes the newspaper boys outdo themselves keeping me busy. It is as if they wish to move themselves to another world as quickly as possible, having seen too much in this already. Only once during that fifteen minutes does Portia show any sign of life, and that is when the drama critic refers to some guy as a ham actor. This causes Portia to blink one eye, twitch her snout slightly and grunt in a high falsetto.

I am just beginning to be amused by Portia and intrigued by the way she has caused my cash register to ring up one sale after another, when the door opens and Gussie strides in, her eyes blazing and her hands balled up. She loses no time coming to the point. "Where is she, you Lothario? You trifling deceiver, you no-good, sweet-talking, high-flying, broken-down Romeo, you! One minute you're trying to rush me off my feet in a whirlwind courtship, and the next minute—or maybe the same one—you're gallivanting around with some spellbinding creature named Portia. Where is she? I'm going to—"

"Now, Gussie, slow down," I say; but trying to stop Gussie from talking once she gets started, is like trying to stop a buzz-saw by holding your finger on it.

"Don't you try to make a pawn of me, Jerry Bolton! It won't do you a bit of good. If I get my hands on this—this—well, I'm not going to degrade myself by saying her proper name—but if I get my hands on her, she'll wish she never saw you. You're just as bad as she is, you—you swine!"

"That's just what I've been trying to tell you, Gussie, sweetheart."

"What have you been trying to tell me?"

"That she's just a swine."

If I live to be two hundred and six and have a long white beard down to my shoes, I will never understand women; because what does Gussie do but hop on me for degrading womanhood. She tells me that if I make a mistake, I should have gumption enough to stand by it and not call other people names just to keep from



The next thing I know Portia lands ka-plunk on the bar.

being called them myself, and—well, Gussie tells me a good many things, and she's got a right dynamic way of doing this. Her gray eyes turn into smoke, and her brown hair gives off sparks, with her tongue a lashing flame, and every ounce of 150 pounds packed into her swinging arms.

"Now, Gussie," I plead, "Portia doesn't mean a thing to me. It's you I love, just like I've been telling you for the last twelve years."

Gussie softens a little bit and her voice drops down to about normal. Something like a smile flits across her face as she says: "There now, Jerry, don't you think I know that no other woman could come between—"

"But Portia's a—"

"There, there, if that's what you think of her, all right, but it isn't kind to go calling people names."

I shrug my shoulders, knowing when I'm licked, and tell her, "All right, pet, Portia's down at the end of the bar sleeping. You and her go ahead and have it out."

With that, Gussie marches down the bar, her umbrella cocked and ready for action; then she lets out a long, shrill scream that must cause considerable commotion in Topeka when the sound reaches there.

"Jerry! There's a pig on your bar!"

"That's Portia, the pig with the sensitive soul."

"Scat!" Gussie screeches. "Scat the devil off of there, you pig." Then she begins to prod Portia with the umbrella. Of course, Portia does not like this; she stands up, sticks out her snout, arches her back, paws the bar with her front feet, and grunts at Gussie. "So!" Gussie yells at me. "This is the kind of animal you've got to eat up your profits? Umph! Fine businessman you are!"

"Portia's a very unusual pig," I explain, and then tell Gussie all about Portia and her habits, not forgetting to mention that Portia drinks leftovers, charges the customers for them, and encourages people such as newspapermen to drink more on a weekday than in their usual custom.

But Gussie pays me no heed; in fact, she doesn't believe me.

"Very well," I say, "I will prove it." I wave to the scribblers and ask them to buy for Portia.

This they are delighted to do, since they are all anxious to see Portia in action, and not being cheapsters, they buy from the crock marked "PORTIA'S WHISKY." First Luke buys; Portia drinks and collects her penny. Then it is Charley's turn, and so on down the line, with Portia apparently holding her drinks like a lady and never once forgetting to collect a penny from each customer. Gussie is watching this demonstration with a blank face; it isn't until Portia has had a drink with everyone that Gussie gets interested.

I look in the porter's closet; there is Portia curled up dejectedly beside the mop-pail.



Those drinks hit Portia fast and hard. She turns three swift somersaults in the middle of the bar and finishes them off with a split. Then she does a double back-flip with her tail in her snout, walks on her front feet, performs a giant swing from the cash register drawer, and stands on her head in the pretzel-bowl; to wind up the act, she bounces off a bar stool, staggers to the juke-box and kicks a hole in its side; then she crawls into the porter's closet, where she lies with her face buried in the wet mop.

"WELL," I say confidently, "don't you agree Portia is unusual?"

"Some of her tricks are all right," Gussie admits, "but she is still a stupid pig. It's all well and good for her to collect a penny for a beer, but any idiot knows that good rye is worth more than that. . . . No, Mr. Bolton, you got stung when you took this Portia, and such being the case, I consider you a poor risk as a husband." Gussie huffs toward the door.

"Aw, Gussie," I say, "why don't you be fair and admit this is an unusual pig?"

"Yeah?" she says to me nastily. "Tell me why pigs don't whistle."

"You got a point there," I say. "Maybe Portia is kind of stupid."

"Darn right she is," says Gussie, and heads out the door, but she never did get clear out.

The air in the room is fairly shattered by a noise which makes the

whistle on the Twentieth Century Limited sound like a squeaking door. It is a double-noted whistle such as one might hear on the corner of Hollywood and Vine, and it has plenty of oomph and flattery in it, especially to someone about Gussie's age who hasn't heard it since it was called "Oh, you kid!"

Gussie spins around, and her face is all red and glowing. Her expression is one of great pleasure, but there is also something thunderstruck about it too. "Jerry! She did it, and praise be! Oh, Jerry, that is an unusual pig, and you are the smartest man that ever was. . . . If you don't mind, sweetie, I think I'll stick around until your night-man comes on duty."

Gussie comes back to the bar and slides up on a stool. There is a light of something kind of loving in her eyes, so I know that I won't have to wait another twelve years for her to make up her mind. "You just wait a little while, Gussie," I tell her, "and we'll step out some place tonight."

But the first chance I get, I go to the porter's closet to look in on Portia. She hasn't moved since she buried her snout in the mop. "You may be a stupid pig," I say to her, "but that don't mean that some day you won't be able to whistle good and loud. I didn't know I could until I tried."

THE END

FIRE MISSION

THE big howitzer hidden in a fold in the bleak, wintry Italian hillside across the valley barked once; the echoes died away into nothingness as the short, undulating, whispering hiss of the projectile's travel ended, and once again silence heavy as a blanket fell upon the Apennines until the distant thump of the shell's explosion, on a road-junction that was in German hands, came drifting back.

In the stone Italian farmhouse an American lieutenant awakened, and with held breath waited after the howitzer's shot to see if it had been an incoming or an outgoing shell. A few minutes after the first shot another was on the way, and the officer rolled over to sleep grumbling to himself: "Damn it, can't ever get used to those night harassing missions."

Soon the howitzer finished firing its harassing mission, and its crew picked their way to their blacked-out kitchen truck through almost knee-deep snow-mud slush for coffee and later a brief two or three hours' sleep before daylight and its unknown demands for artillery fire would come. One cannoner muttered: "Hope it clouds over so the Cubs can't get up, and we'll have some rest and not be firing all day long." Answering him, another said: "If you'd ever been on an observation post, you'd be plenty glad when the Cubs are up; then the Krauts don't throw in very much of mortars or artillery."

Down in the bottom of the valley, engineer bulldozers had pushed enough rocks and brush aside for a five-hundred-yard-long and ten-yard-wide strip of metal landing-mat to be laid down, and had cleared off enough ground for a few hardstands, where the tiny fabric, wood and metal unarmed light observation planes of the Field Artillery stood. Here, as the eastern sky seemed to turn just a bit less dark, the night guard stumbled up to one of the teuts, leaned inside and shook a body on one of the canvas cots as he whispered: "Don, Don, it's time to warm 'em up. One of your planes flies the first patrol."

Sergeant Don grumbled: "Okay, okay, I'll be right up." He pulled on his clothes, shivered at the damp chill of the mountain air and picked his way out to a nearby L-4, Piper Cub plane with the name *Margie* scribed along the painted figure of a lovely girl that adorned the side of the plane. Soon he had the wings, cockpit, en-

gine and propeller uncovered and the motor serviced. He then turned the prop and finally gave it several quick pulls until the four cylinders burst into life and the engine was steadily turning over.

By this time it was almost light enough to see by, so he climbed the short slope to the Italian farmhouse and stopped at the room where the pilots and observers slept. He entered and shook two of them awake with: "You're top man today." The lieutenants groggily pulled on heavy clothes and layers of socks, and picked up maps and field-glasses; then the observer went off to the air-strip operations tent to get any late information and fix the radio-call signs that they would use to identify themselves. Meanwhile the pilot went on down to the plane with the mechanic. The plane was by this time running steadily and its engine was well warmed up.

The observer soon joined the others at the plane, which now had its engine shut off. "Sector Baker is ours, George," he told the pilot, "and we're on Corps patrol, working as Mike Xray King Five Zero." The pilot nodded, wrote the call sign and sector on his plexiglas window with grease pencil, hung his field-glasses from his neck and climbed into the front seat of the plane.

"Any hot poop or special stuff, to-day, Swede?" the pilot asked as he buckled his parachute harness on and snapped shut the clasp of his safety belt.

"Nope," answered the observer. He tested the radio for strength and operation, then climbed into the rear seat and fastened his parachute and safety-belt buckles. As he slipped on the flying-helmet with built-in radio earphones, the mechanic spun the propeller and the engine started. The pilot taxied the ship out onto the metal strip and to the downwind end of it, turned the plane, held the brakes on and throttled the engine to maximum revolutions and checked both magnetos. Then, relaxing the brakes, he pushed the throttle forward and, slowly at first, but rapidly gaining in forward speed later, the little plane sped down the uneven surface of the strip until it finally was airborne and climbing.

As it passed its hardstand, Swede in the plane and Don on the ground exchanged their customary wave-off good-luck salute, and the Cub climbed on into the northern sky.

The little plane flew north in the valley, steadily climbing until within three or four miles of the enemy-held high ground across the larger valley that the air-strip valley drained into. Here it turned, flew back up the home valley over the airstrip, now two thousand feet below, and, with another turn, headed toward the front.

The plane was still climbing as it approached the lines and then Swede took the hand microphone off its hook and spoke into it: "*Mike Xray King, Mike Xray King, this is Mike Xray King Five Zero, over.*"

The radio set on the ground in the Corps Artillery Command Post soon answered: "*Mike Xray King Five Zero, this is Mike Xray King, I hear you loud and clear, over.*"

Swede spoke again: "*Mike Xray King Five Zero, I hear you loud and clear, we are checking into the net on patrol in Sector Baker, over.*"

The Corps Artillery radio came on again: "*Mike Xray King Five Zero, Roger, nothing special for you, out.*" The last word, *out*, signified that, as far as the Corps was concerned the conversation was ended. By this time the plane was over the front lines and had the four to five thousand feet of



The story of an unsung hero—the forward observer in the little unarmed Piper Cub, who spotted targets for the artillery.

By ROBERT E. KLEINER



altitude—above the highest ground it would fly over—that was felt necessary by its pilot to keep it safe from enemy light flak and small-arms fire.

Swede glanced at the usual orienting points he used to keep the ground as he looked down on it correlated with his interpretation of the map he carried. He then began systematically searching the darker hollows and reverse slopes in enemy territory for the telltale flashes of German guns that would still be easily visible in the poor light of the dawn. None were to be seen, so the plane edged farther into enemy skies and, as full daylight approached, the pilot and observer began checking the roads and trails leading to the front for enemy traffic.

Margie and her crew had been airborne for thirty minutes and still no targets had been found, when suddenly Swede shouted to George over the engine's roar, "Look on that small back road running south of Zocca; it is to the right of the main road—see, is that a vehicle?" The pilot banked the ship and looked.

"Nothing I can see," he shouted back over his shoulder. Then, as he looked again: "Yes, I see it, going through that dark place where the

snow's melted—it's a big old tank with snow camouflage—lower the boom on him."

"No, let's wait until he gets closer to the lines, and stops," the observer said. "Ease off to the east where we can still watch him and the Krauts won't suspect we've seen him." The pilot accordingly took the plane off to the extreme right of the sector as the observer went on the air: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, over."

The Corps Artillery ground set answered: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, over."

Swede then gave the information: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, enemy Tiger tank moving south on small road at coordinates 560-375. Request fire mission as soon as it stops. Have battery stand by, over!" The ground set repeated the message to certify its correctness and ended with "I wait."

Soon the ground set came on again: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, work with Peter Baker Oboe for your mission, over."

Swede acknowledged the message and called Peter Baker Oboe and established contact with that radio. Shouting to George, he said: "Peter Baker Oboe is that Long Tom outfit that's

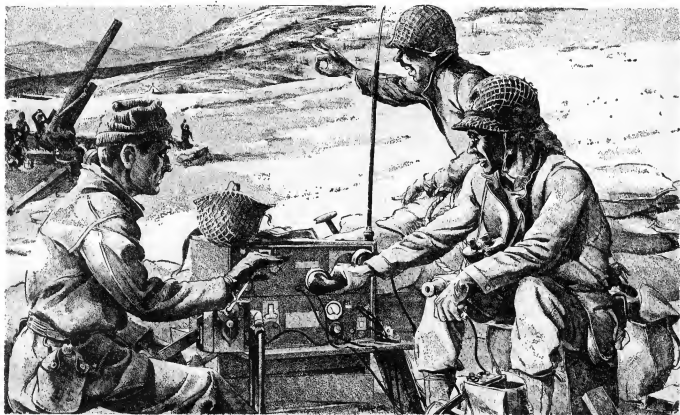
got that lone eight-inch howitzer—hope they give us that gun to fire the mission." Soon Peter Baker Oboe came on the air again and assigned one of its batteries to be ready to fire.

Meanwhile the big Tiger tank lumbered down the back road, across the main road, over a ridge on another back road and into a small cluster of ten stone buildings that lay on the main road. It disappeared into this small group of houses and did not again appear. Quickly Swede hit his microphone button: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, enemy tank stopped in small group of buildings at coordinates 535-355, fire one round of smoke when ready, will adjust, over."

The battery assigned to fire answered: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, this is Able One, enemy tank stopped in small group of buildings at coordinates 535-355; is that correct? Over."

"Mike Xray King Five Zero, that is correct, fire one round smoke when ready, over," spoke the plane, impatient to get the firing started.

"Mike Xray King Five Zero, this is Able One. We will not fire smoke; you will not need it—Betsy is firing," the battery spoke again—stating that the customary first round of smoke fired



"There's Shifty George coming home. I bet he's been making it hot for Jerry."

*Illustrated by
Arthur Harper*



As the smoke billowed up, Swede called the round: "Target—tank destroyed and burning."

in order to give the observer absolute proof of where the rounds are falling would not be necessary.

"Mike Xray King Five Zero, Roger, thank you, out," Swede answered and yelled gleefully to the pilot: "Hey, we're getting the eight-inch, Betsy—watch those buildings disappear!"

JOY within the plane was almost unbounded; for the gun that was going to fire on the tank was one of the few guns in the entire Fifth Army that winter over six inches in caliber. Most of the heavier guns had been sent to Southern France with the Seventh Army and it was a rare delight for an artillery observer to get to watch artillery fire from an eight-inch howitzer during that last winter of the war in Italy. The eight-inch howitzer not only fired a projectile twice as heavy as that of the Long Tom guns but also it was probably the most accurate field-artillery gun in the American Army. Its accuracy plus the weight of the shell it fired made the eight-inch howitzer an ideal weapon for the destruction of a small but extremely hardy target such as a Tiger tank.

A few minutes passed; the tank did not leave the group of buildings; and then the firing battery came on the air, "Able One, on the way, over." This meant that their gun had fired.

"King Five Zero, Roger, wait," answered Swede, acknowledging the information that the gun had fired and using only part of his call sign in order to speed up the radio conversation.

After what seemed like a long time for the shell to travel from the gun to the target the firing battery came on the air with, "Able One, splash." This meant that within a very few seconds the shell would land and was a warning to the observer to watch for it. A few seconds later the huge burst of the shell was seen—less than one hundred yards short of the group of buildings.

"King Five Zero, one hundred short, over," Swede called the round, giving a sensing (estimate) of more than it had fallen short in order that the next round would be over the target.

"Able One, one hundred short, out," the firing battery acknowledged and soon after came on again, "Able One, on the way, over." The observer acknowledged the "On the way" and soon the battery again gave "Splash." The second round hit a bit to the left of the center building and slightly beyond it.

Swede sensed the second round, "King Five Zero, one zero left, two five over, over." This meant that, with the second round being definitely over the target he knew that he had it bracketed with two rounds and could then give precise sensings designed to hit it. His second sensing actually was ten yards left, twenty-five

yards over, but, in radio procedure it was transmitted as "One zero left, two five over" in order to lessen chances for misunderstandings between observer and battery. Swede then leaned forward and yelled to the pilot: "George, let's go in on him and see if we can actually see the tank." The pilot turned the Cub and eased over closer to the target.

The third round landed. "King Five Zero, target," Swede sensed it as he watched the top story of the center building explode in a huge cloud of dust and debris. Just as this dust and debris settled to the ground he saw the Tiger's bulk, hidden before by a roof between the damaged building and its neighbor but now easily seen. "King Five Zero, disregard last sensing, new sensing five left, repeat range, over," he quickly spoke to the firing battery before they again fired.

The fourth round had not yet been fired and the plane was now virtually hanging in the air almost directly over the target as the pilot and observer, in their eagerness having forgotten that they were flying deeper into enemy territory than they usually did, looked down upon the Tiger. Just before the firing battery gave "On the way," the pilot turned the plane in order to get into the best position for observation. For a few seconds it was flying with its tail toward the distant Po Valley. Then, as the radio message from the firing battery came, "Able One, on the way, over," the tiny plane was sharply lifted by the concussion of nearby antiaircraft shell bursts. It rocked violently and felt as if it had been hit by a truck. Immediately George threw it into a steep, twisting dive toward friendly territory to throw the German flak directors off and Swede twisted about, shivered a bit at the sight of six blobs of dark smoke clustered in the sky above them, and quickly looked down to search enemy ground for any gun flashes from the 88-millimeter flak battery that had fired at them. But the canny German did not fire again, knowing full well that, if any American artillery observation plane he fired upon ever located his battery by its gun flashes, he could expect complete destruction as from one to many artillery battalions would with a vengeance come to the aid of their planes and pound his flak battery unmercifully. So, with the one volley he had fired when the plane was turned away from him and could not see his gun flashes the German was prudently content and would not again fire unless he could do so without risk of having his battery located. George pulled the plane out of its dive and maneuvered it into observing position in an area not so deep in enemy territory.

The fourth round landed, short by ten yards. The fifth was slightly over,

and as the sixth was on the way, several human figures, tiny when seen from the altitude the Cub was flying at, ran wildly from the buildings toward a wooded gully about one hundred yards to one side of the group of buildings. The sixth round hit the Tiger, threw it over and set it on fire and as the black smoke billowed up fiercely Swede called the round, "King Five Zero, target—tank destroyed and burning, enemy personnel active in vicinity, give me one more round at a sensing of one zero right, over." The round came, hit a large building near the tank and set it on fire. As the results of this last round were reported, the Battalion Fire Direction Center of the battalion the firing battery belonged to came on the air.

"Mike Xray King Five Zero, this is Peter Baker Obno. We cannot give you any more fire on this target, sorry, over," the radio said. The regret of the battalion at their having to call an end to the firing of the eight-inch howitzer was very evident and expressed the feelings of everyone in the Italian war in regard to the limitations put on artillery fire during the bitter, heartbreaking static mountain warfare of the winter when ammunition shortages severely curtailed the damage that the artillery could do to the Germans.

Swede answered, "Mike Xray King Five Zero, Roger, cease fire; mission accomplished, tank destroyed, out." He then called again, "This is Mike Xray King Five Zero; enemy personnel very active in vicinity of my last target at coordinates 535-355. Can anybody fire on them? Over." Yelling to the pilot, not over the radio, he said, "Damn this ammo shortage—just when we're getting hits we got to cease fire! I bet that whole town is lousy with Krauts and supplies." As he spoke the occupants of the plane could see more humans scurrying about the burning tank and buildings and running back and forth between the buildings and the wooded gully.

A NEW voice came over the radio: "Mike Xray King Five Zero, this is Easy George Fox, we can fire that mission for you, work with Dog One, over."

"Yippee," the observer yelled to the pilot, "that's our battalion, right on the ball—watch us chase those Krauts with one-oh-fives." Then he spoke into his microphone: "Dog One, Dog One, this is King Five Zero, fire when ready, over."

"King Five Zero, this is Dog One, we will fire battery volleys to adjust, over," the firing battery answered—sending excitement and happiness into the small plane as its crew learned that lots of the more plentiful one-hundred- and five-millimeter ammunition would be used against the enemy personnel

than the Long Tom Battalion had been able to fire out of the eight-inch howitzer. The smaller, slightly over four inches in diameter, one-hundred-and-five-millimeter shells could not do the damage to armored vehicles and buildings that the eight-inch shells had done but they were ideal for effect against personnel in the open. The firing battery's firing of battery volleys to adjust meant that each time the battery fired, six shells would be on the way from all of the self-propelled guns of the battery instead of only one as in the case of the eight-inch. Firing battery volleys also meant the shells would cover a larger area with their deadly spray of fragments before the surprised Germans could take over.

The first volley landed and was sensed one hundred right and two hundred short. The second volley landed and was sensed fifty yards short and the sensing was followed with, "Fire for effect." Then the Cub, now again in enemy territory, almost over the target, felt the shock of the concussion of another flak burst. Looking about, the crew saw no bursts above them or to the sides but, just below their tail, the small puff of smoke from the burst of a forty-millimeter light flak shell hung in the air. They quickly forgot about it, knowing that they were flying high enough that forty-millimeter flak could not reach them except occasionally at its extreme range and then it would be so inaccurate as to have little chance of hitting them.

The effect landed: three volleys of high-explosive shells or eighteen shells all told—each containing over thirty pounds of steel and explosive—landed in the edge of the wooded gully where the Germans had fled to. "King Five Zero, Five zero short, repeat effect, over," the observer spoke to the firing battery. The second effect landed in the center portion of the wooded gully and soon several small, bright fires flamed up through the dust. "Five Zero short, repeat effect," the observer again said. The third effect started two more small fires—giving convincing proof that the wooded gully was the storage place for ammunition or fuels. "King Five Zero, right in there, we've started some fires with those last two effects, stand by, over," Swede reported to the firing battery. Then the crew of Margie watched the group of buildings and the wooded gully closely for other signs of enemy activity as the little plane, cruising slowly between sixty and seventy miles an hour, impudently circled over German-held ground.

Some of the smoke and dust hanging over the target area drifted away and George called back to Swede, "Swede, is that some Krauts moving along the side of the buildings to the left of the Tiger?"

Swede looked more closely through his field-glasses and saw what had caught the pilot's eye. Several figures were working their way along the side of the street by hugging the sides of the buildings in hope of escaping observation. He spoke into his microphone, "King Five Zero, one hundred left, one hundred over, five one volley, over." The volley landed in the street. The super-quick fuses of the shells detonated them at the very instant they touched the earth, and the fragments sprayed out, cutting a deadly swath through anything above ground. As the dust drifted away from the target Swede sensed the volley, "King Five Zero, right in there, five zero left, repeat one volley, over." Again the six rounds hit in the street, this time farther to the right than the first volley. With two more volleys the observer completed the deadly clearing of the street and he then watched the target area closely and searched its vicinity for several minutes for further sign of life. Nothing moved and only the burning tank and smoldering supplies in the woods gave evidence of enemy presence. The pilot looked back, saying: "We've only fifteen or twenty minutes of gas left, Swede."

Swede nodded and went on the air, "King Five Zero, cease fire—mission accomplished: several small fires started in enemy fuel or ammo supplies, enemy personnel seen in woods and among buildings shelled and no longer active. Wonderful shooting, suggest you fire harassing fire on this target during the rest of the day. Thank you very much for a good shoot, over."

WHILE he described the effect of the shooting on the enemy, the firing battery's executive officer held the telephone that was connected to phones on all the guns to his radio speaker so that the cannoners who had actually done the shooting could hear the observer report the effect of their work. After the observer finished his description of the fire mission one cannoner said, "I hope that some day our Cubs give us a fire mission on Berchtesgaden. We'll pound the mustache off the head man of the damn Krauts!"

The firing battery acknowledged Swede's description of the fire mission and then went off the air as he called the Corps Artillery radio, "Mike Xray King, this is Mike Xray King Five Zero; request permission to check out of the net and go home, over."

The Corps Artillery ground set answered them, "Mike Xray King Five Zero, this is Mike Xray King, permission granted, your relief is on patrol, out."

The little plane turned away from the front and began its homeward flight. It passed over a high, steep peak near the lines but in American

territory. In deep foxholes on the top of that peak lay the members of another section of the same field artillery battalion that George and Swede belonged to. This section, an officer and three enlisted men in it, was a forward observation party. Their job was to live with the forward infantry elements and to place effective artillery fire wherever it was most needed by the infantry.

They had been listening to the radio communication between their Cub plane and the firing batteries as the Tiger tank was destroyed and, later, as the Germans in the vicinity of the tank were shelled. Listening with them were the infantrymen who shared the observation post with the artillery forward observers. As the Cub droned overhead on its homeward way one infantryman looked up and waved a casual salute while he said, "There's our best airplane—the little old Corporal of the Guard—when he's on post a lot of guys' lives are saved; 'cause the Krauts are afraid to shoot then."

A second infantryman joined in with, "Yeah, the bomber crews and fighter pilots get all the glory and nobody ever writes a story about the poor little old Cub up there without an ounce of armor plate or a slingshot to save his hide with; he's even more forgotten than the infantry is. But we love him and there's one Kraut tank that won't pound us tonight after the Corporal of the Guard and old Betsy got him."

The Cub passed beyond the peak and over a South African tank company hidden behind a ridge top. One of the South Africans glanced up and said: "There's old Shifty George coming home after dodging around over Jerry all morning. I bet he's been making it hot for Jerry—the way that Yank outfit in the valley's been banging away!"

A friend asked, "How did they ever come to call those kites Shifty George?"

"Oh, the blokes gave him that name from the way he shifts around and ducks Jerry flak and fighters—it's a really good name, you know."

The simple little wire gas gauge that stuck up out of the gas tank in front of the pilot in the Cub was firmly settled down as far as it could go as George made the last turn in the narrow Apennine valley and slipped the light plane from side to side to kill speed and lose altitude before gently setting the wheels down on the metal of the home strip. The Corporal of the Guard, Shifty George, Piper Cub L-4 or the unprintable names the Germans used; call it what you may, another of the thousands of Field Artillery Air Observation missions had been flown by the little planes that, unknown to many, played an important part in the Second World War.



THE SCARLET LETTER MADE FAMOUS BY HAWTHORNE WAS BY NO MEANS THE ONLY BADGE OF IGNOMINY INFLICTED BY OUR PURITAN FOREFATHERS.

by FAIRFAX DOWNEY

Devices in Scarlet

STERN-VISAGED though he was, Justice Brand of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony was yet a handsome man, still in his prime. He stood tall and straight in peaked hat, long cape, and garb of sober hue. Not arrogantly but with the mien of one who wields the power of life and death, he strode through the streets of Boston town. Men and women watched him pass, some with awe, others with fear scarcely concealed.

By the Justice's side today walked a friend, newly come to the Colony from England. As they entered the Common, culprits confined in the stocks and pillory eyed the Judge apprehensively but not bitterly. Better to sit shivering, locked in the stocks, or stand long cramping hours with head and hands pilloried, than take twenty stripes at the whipping-post yonder whither they might have been sent. All Boston said of Justice Brand that while departing not from the letter of the law, he tempered it when he could with mercy.

The newcomer nodded toward the men in stocks and pillory. "A sight no less familiar at home," he observed.

"Aye, Friend Dickson," the Justice answered. "And mark how yon instruments of punishment flank the meeting-house. Thus they stood anciently in the day of the Prophet Jeremiah, hard by the house of the Lord, and so we place them. You will comprehend why 'tis so when you know Boston better."

"Our statutes in 1641 demanded death for twelve crimes—mercifully today reduced to three. Capital punishment, in each case sustained by the Scriptures, was imposed upon those convicted of"—he ticked them off on his fingers—"idolatry, witchcraft, blasphemy, murder (willful, guileful, or in passion), sodomy, bestiality, man-stealing, false witness to take away life, treason, and—and adultery."

"And men convicted of all such crimes were hanged?"

"Aye, and women too. The day is not long past—God be thanked that I sat not then as a justice—when twenty persons, chiefly women, were executed as witches, with all the Colony inflamed to madness by the sermons and writings of our minister, Cotton Mather—" He abruptly broke off and looked cautiously about him. Ob-

viously none had been close enough to overhear. Justice of the General Court though he was, he looked vastly relieved.

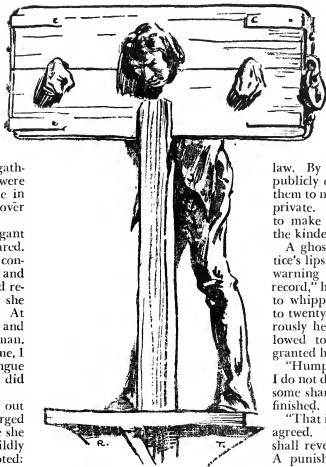
"It is not we, the magistrates, who are really feared by the people, but the clergy," he continued in lowered tones. "It was the ministers who demanded enactment of our strictest laws. They it was who clamored for the harsh, implacable punishments of the Old Testament."

"How else may crime be halted?"

Justice Brand answered gravely: "Wickedness stopped by strict laws, like streams dammed from running quietly in their own channels, breaks out where it gets vent. Thus declared William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth Colony two-score years ago. His are true words. There are some among us now—and I am one—who believe that laws too numerous and too cruel serve but to drive poor sinners into the Devil's talons."

For some moments he fell silent, then resumed: "Come, let us turn to more pleasant thoughts today. If we make haste toward the pond at this end of town, we shall be in time to witness the ducking of a scold."

*Illustrated
by Raymond
Thayer*



A jeering jostling crowd was gathered at the pool. Town sergeants were binding a buxom, red-faced dame in a seat on the end of a plank, laid over a trestle like a seesaw.

"'Tis Goody Applegate, a termagant in very truth," Justice Brand declared. "She spent all day constantly and continually scolding her goodman and children. Then she turned to and reviled her neighbors. Thereafter she railed at the dog and the poultry. At night she opened the window and bawled imprecations at the watchman. Why, when she stood trial before me, I was compelled to order her tongue pinched in a cleft stick, so unruly did that member wag."

The sergeants swung the plank out over the water. Twice they submerged the woman on its end. Each time she came up sputtering and ranting wildly in her rage. Dickson gleefully quoted:

*She mounts again and rages more
Than ever wixen did before,
So throwing water on the fire
Will make it but burn up the higher.
If so, my friend, pray let her take
A second turn into the lake,
And rather than your patience lose,
Thrice and again repeat the dose.
No brawling wives, no furious wenches,
No fire so hot but water quenches.*

Twice more they ducked Goody Applegate before she cried out: "Let me go! By God's help I'll sin no more."

"Untie the ropes," Justice Brand ordered, "and let her walk home in her wetted clothes, a hopefully penitent woman."

Strolling back toward the town, the Judge remarked to his companion:

"In earlier times yonder scold would have been tied to a cart-tail and flogged all the way to the pond. Such need not be. The ducking sufficed."

(Dickson smiled to himself. Again he thought: "A ducking with all the rest would well serve your wife, Friend Brand. Never have I encountered so unquiet a woman, nor one with so bitter and biting a tongue. A harried life she leads you at home with her shrewish nagging. Yet you dare not send her to the ducking-stool; nor will any other, since she is the wife of a judge. In truth, the bench is no easy seat. 'Tis plain why you are so stanch an advocate of mercy and mildness, Friend Brand. Sore need have you of them at home.")

"The ducking sufficed," Brand was repeating. "We need not resort so often to the whipping-post. Why, 'tis said that all inhabitants of the town of New Haven—all above the age of fourteen—have been whipped for some misdemeanor or other. All, that is, excepting two."

Dickson, grinning, spoke up: "And I doubt not you two exceptions are: the minister and the justice of the town."

Justice Brand nodded assent.

"Too many laws," he mused. "Our courts are hard-pressed trying violations of the Sabbath alone. Be advised, Friend Dickson, now you are come among us, that on the Lord's Day none shall dance, play at cards, make mince pies nor play upon any instruments of music save the drum, trumpet or jew's-harp."

"Take note, too, that on the Sabbath no married couple may embrace in public under penalty of a fine or a flogging. Not long since a sea-captain of this town, returning from a long voyage, met his wife upon the street and bussed her heartily. Unhappily, 'twas the Sabbath. He was fined, but only ten shillings, circumstances being taken into account."

"A silly ordinance," Dickson scoffed. "Why, in Old England on any day a man without legal penalty, not only kisses his own wife but other men's, too. Ha-ha!"

"The law is the law," Dickson pursued, still chuckling; "'tis an excellent

law. By forbidding lovers to embrace publicly on the Sabbath, it persuades them to make the most of their time in private. Surely a good-humored lass, to make amends, should kiss me all the kinder in a corner."

A ghost of a smile curved the Justice's lips, but he held up a hand in a warning gesture. "There is recent record," he said, "of a couple sentenced to whipping for Sabbath kissing—she to twenty lashes, he to thirty. Chivalrously he made a plea that he be allowed to take all fifty, and it was granted him."

"Humph!" the other sniffed. "Yet I do not deny that the law must punish some shameful and unchaste acts," he finished.

"That it must," the Justice austere-ly agreed. "Come now with me, and I shall reveal a punishment we inflict: A punishment of seeming mildness, yet more to be dreaded than banishment—mayhap even more than death. A punishment which seeks out the most secret sins and publishes them to all mankind in the broadest light of the noonday sun."

Grimly, he led the way to a house hard by the Common. Its door was opened to his knock by a little old woman who bobbed a stiff and creaking curtsy as she gave him welcome.

"This is Goody Gregory," the Justice introduced her, "a sewing-woman employed by the General Court upon a certain task."

"The letters are ready, Your Worship," the old woman announced.

"Come, sec. How like you them?"

She motioned toward an oaken table on which was spread an array of letters of the alphabet, neatly cut from scarlet cloth. Some were two inches high, others larger. The Justice's gaze rested somberly on the A. His deep voice recited:

"And if any man shall commit adultery," declared our court, "the man and woman that shall be convicted of such crime before Their Majesties' justices shall be set upon the gallows for the space of an hour, with a rope about their necks, and the other end cast over the gallows, and on the way from thence to the common goal shall be severely whipped, not exceeding forty stripes each. Also every person and persons so offending shall forever after wear a capital A, of two inches long; and proportionate bigness, cut

out in cloth of a contrary color to their clothes, and sewed upon their upper garments in open view.' If any shall be found without the letter, they shall suffer fifteen stripes more."

"What if the woman alone shall be taken?" Dickson asked.

"Then shall she suffer the penalty alone," the Judge declared inflexibly.

He pointed to the various letters, explaining them. How the *B* must be worn by those convicted of blasphemy, burglary or of bastardy; in the case of the third-mentioned, the woman also was whipped and fined, but the man sentenced only to contribute to the illegitimate child's support. *D* was the stigma for drunkards who must wear it a year and night in addition be disfranchised, forbidden to hold office, flogged and given a term in a work gang. *F* was the brand of forgery or of fornication, and *I* of incest, guilty ones being also whipped on a gallows.

"A scarlet *P* signifies a poisoner," Brand went on. "*R*, one who has committed rape. *T* marks a thief, and *V* those guilty of vulgarity or viciousness."

"Here lies my rarest bit of scissoring," boasted the old woman. She showed them the clearly recognizable silhouette of an Indian warrior, cut from red cloth.

"A white woman must wear yon image a twelve-month upon her right arm if she cohabits with one of the red savages," Justice Brand expounded.

As the two men took their leave and stepped out upon the stoop, Dickson remarked:

"'Tis curious, though I have been a fortnight long in Boston, that I have not yet beheld any such scarlet symbols."

"Then use your eyes now," Goody Gregory cackled from the doorway behind them. "There she minces, the hussy! Her the Justice here sentenced himself!"

Across the Common a young woman came toward them, a small boy trudging at her side. The hooded cloak of gray she wore was thrown open despite the chill air. As she approached, a scarlet letter *A* gleamed on the breast of her gown.

"Wouldn't tell who 'twas begot that brat," snapped Goody Gregory. "Said he was married, and she would not be his ruin. But you dealt with her proper, Your Worship."

THE woman was comely, Dickson saw—her hair fair under her hood, her gray eyes lustrous though sad, her lips alluring, firm-compressed as they were. Evidently she had recognized the Justice who condemned her, yet she made no effort to avoid him by taking another path.

"Behold!" Dickson gasped. "See how she has bordered the scarlet token on her breast with golden thread! Yon *A* she wears might mean Admirable—or anything rather than Adulteress."

The wearer of the scarlet letter paid no heed to the speaker. She only grasped more tightly the hand of her handsome little son. But proud and unashamed, she looked straight into Justice Brand's eyes as she passed—a look which held no resentment but rather compassion and something deeper still.

"Did you not see how she had edged yon letter with gold?" Dickson indignantly cried. "Why, she sports her infamy! What say you to that, Friend Brand?"

The Justice's answer came at last in a strangled voice.

"What say I? What One once said upon the Mount long ago: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'"

Dickson gazed curiously at him. "These New-Englanders!" he muttered under his breath. "Ned Ward was right in what he published in London of them after his sojourn here in Boston. They can neither drive a bargain, make a jest nor scarce give any answer without a text of Scripture on't."



Goody Applegate came up sputtering and ranting wildly. Twice more they ducked her before she cried out: "Let me go! By God's help I'll sin no more."

The LOG of the TIRANTE

HERE WE HAVE THE SIMPLE DAY-BY-DAY RECORD, JUST RE-LEASED BY THE NAVY DEPARTMENT, OF A SUBMARINE PATROL THAT WON THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION FOR THE SHIP AND THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR FOR HER COMMANDER, LT. COMDR. G. L. STREET III, U.S.N.

PROLOGUE

SHIP placed in commission at Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H., on Nov. 6, 1944. Lieutenant Commander G. L. Street III, USN, assumed command. Ship completed on Nov. 23, 1944, and commenced training in fog, storms, and freezing weather off Portsmouth. *Tirante's* builders did a wonderful job.

Arrived New London, Conn., on Dec. 21, 1944. Departed Jan. 8, 1945 for Balboa, arriving there on January 16th. Departed Jan. 26, arrived Pearl Feb. 10, 1945. Departed Pearl for Saipan on First War Patrol on March 3, 1945.

March 3, 1945

Departed Pearl Harbor in accordance with ComTaskForce 17 Operation Order No. 65-45, en route to west coast of Kyushu via Saipan to form coordinated attack group with *Tinosa* and *Spadefish*, with Commanding Officer *Tinosa* as group commander.

March 11

1450 L. Sighted *Scabbardfish* and exchanged pleasantries.

March 15

Arrived Saipan.

March 18

1000 L. Ensign W. N. Dietzen, USN, reported for duty.

1306 L. Underway.

Proceeded on patrol under escort.

1420 L. Discovered stowaway, a seaman, first class, attached to U.S.S. *Fulton*.

1630 L. Put bow alongside escort (YMS 343) and transferred stowaway. March 18-24

En route Area Nine, conducting routine training. Slowed SOA from 15 to 11 knots on account of heavy weather.

March 19

0600 L. Contacted U.S.S. *Haddock*.

March 22

0715 L. Sighted U.S.S. *Trepang*.

March 24

0855 I. Dived, commenced approach to Tokara Straits.

1853 I. Surfaced.

1910 I. The Captain took the deck for a few minutes and was rewarded by hearing, then sighting, a single engine plane buzzing along almost over the after capstan. Diving time a little faster than that of a rock.

2021 I. Surfaced. Transient strait without further incident.

Entered Area Nine.

March 25

1200 Posit 31-08 N 130-35 E. (All times item).

0504 Dived five miles off Kaimon. Dase for first day's submerged patrol. Cloaked to 3000 yards off the beach.

0830 Sighted converted whale Killer type patrol boat. See special report. Many small craft sighted during day.

FIRST ATTACK

Sunk—3080 Ton AK *Kiyotada* Class
Lat 31-08 N Long 130-30 E

1320 Sighted ship. Commenced approach.

1325 Ship identified as torpedo target. Conducted normal submerged approach.

1330 Identified target as *Kiyotada* Class AK.

1341-40 Fired 3 torpedoes aft.

1343 One hit. Target disintegrated. Took picture. Target sank bows first in about one minute.

1344 Two torpedoes hit beach and exploded.

1349-1445 Received two depth charges and two aircraft bombs, all distant.

First Blood for Tirante!

1953 Surfaced.

2037 Dived on SD contact.

2123 Surfaced. All clear. Desired to remain undetected and dive up north off Oniki Saki in morning to allow this area to cool off a bit.

March 26

1200 Posit 32-08 N 129-55 E.

0220 Dived for a plane.

0239 Surfaced.

0505 Dived 6 miles off O Shima, just south of Oniki Saki. Not such a good place, as events proved. Were bothered all day by small craft. Although we closed to 2000 yards from a group of rocks off shore, two small tankers, a small AK, and a small hospital ship passed inshore of the rocks in the late afternoon, disclosing the use of a heretofore unreported inland passage along the coast.

2000 Surfaced, with a sigh of H.P. air. Intend to come back to where they'll have to give us a shot tomorrow—sealing off the northern approach to this inland passage.

March 27

1200 Posit 32-15 N 129-57 E.

0231 Dived for a plane. Flooded main induction (personnel casualty).

0344 Surfaced.

0450 Dived. Patrolled all day about 3000 yards off Oniki Saki. Bothered somewhat by fishermen working in pairs towing nets between them. A few bad moments as one persistent pair forced us to 150 feet to duck under their net. Glassy sea. Big ships stayed home.

1947 Surfaced.

2106 Dived for a plane. Lookouts getting better fast. Moon as bright as day. Commenced counter measure of completely flooding down to 24 feet, 1½° down angle. Advantages (1) Diving time 30 seconds (average). (2) Smaller radar target and silhouette.

March 28

0425 Dived off Oniki Saki. Sighted various patrol and small craft during morning. Patrolled 2000-4000 yards off Oniki Saki.

SECOND ATTACK

Sunk 2700 Ton AK
32-15 N 129-55 E

1205 Sighted smoke, which developed into a small AK, MFM, composite superstructure, cruiser stern, plumb bow, heavily laden. Identified as type "C" Fox Tare Charlie. About 2700 tons. Executed standard submerged approach from land side. . . .

1304-30 Fired three MK 18 torpedoes fwd.

1305-13 One terrific hit at MOT by MK 18-2 torpedo donated by employees of the Westinghouse MK 18 Factory, Sharon, Pa. Target sank instantly. Diving time 30 seconds. Took 3 pictures. Other two torpedoes were "robbed" as they ran out to sea "hot straight and normal" and sank. No end of run explosions, in water 50 fathoms deep.

1324-1453 Evading. Received 8 depth charges. Target was apparently not escorted, but the area was patrolled by Japanese Special Submarine

Chaser No. 1 and he happened to be near by—also his partner, whom he promptly called in.

1826 Sighted "Killer" group of three SC boats patrolling area, pinging sonically every 1½ seconds.

2001 Surfaced.

2045 Dived for a plane, whose exhaust was sighted by lookout. Suspect this was the same star we dived for last night (sighted by same lookout).

2123 Surfaced. . . . Then changed course and headed south at high speed to let this area cool off.

March 29

1200 Posit 31-05 N 129-40 E.

Received message giving life guard station for air strike on Kyushu and Jap fleet if it comes out. Luckily we are near the designated position.

0100 Increased speed to full on four engines. Have time to make a sweep of coast of Kyushu from Nomo Misaki to Kaimon Dake before sunrise.

0100-0416 Ran down coast 13 miles off shore at 19 knots making careful radar search, hoping at least to be able to make a contact report on Jap fleet units, if any were there. Covered estimated speed of advance 18 to 12 knots. No luck.

0547. On life guard station. Made trim dive.

0615 Surfaced. Flooded down decks awash. Hoisted colors. Day ineffectual. Saw 8 planes during day. . . . Stayed up and watched a Zeke go by at 4 miles. Dived once, when two land-based bomber-type planes came in zero angle on the bow. . . . Entertained ship's company by letting them hear and read our carrier plane pilots' remarks as they blasted Kyushu.

1845 Secured life guard. Dived twice for planes before 2400.

March 30

1200 Posit 31-07 N 130-36 E.

En route to submerged patrol spot off Bono Misaki.

0305 Radar contact . . . which developed into a small vessel on course about 020°T.

FIRST GUN ATTACK

Sunk 100 Ton Lugger

Lat 31-11 N Long 130-04 E.

0352 Decided this fellow was a gun target; so went to Battle Stations Surface. Ended around to get target silhouetted against bright moon, then closed him, keeping bows on, intending to open fire with the forward 40mm and 20mm while closing, then swing broadside to polish him off. Held the *Tirante* "Foxhole" in reserve, much to their disgust.

0410 Sighted target and identified him as standard Jap lugger.

0428 Commenced firing at 2000 yds. Target fired a burst of .30 cal. tracer which whizzed overhead. Fwd. 40mm silenced him. Swung left at 1800 yards range to unmask battery.

First 5" shot hit the target, going completely through him, and that gun, hitting consistently, demolished the target. The 40mm did not do as well because of poor pointing, until range decreased to 1000 yards. The after 40mm partially blinded the 5" crew, and in return the blast from the 5" trained well forward almost lifted the after 40mm crew out of their seats; but undaunted, both crews methodically went to work and cut the lugger to ribbons.

0447 Ceased firing, came alongside to pick up some prisoners. Target had practically had her stern shot off, and was burning furiously amidships and aft. Passed 25 yards away, saw about 10 Japs jump into the water, so withheld fire to get prisoners. . . . Decided against taking any prisoners. . . . Also it was early in the patrol; so departed the scene, leaving the lugger blazing brightly, sunk till her gunwales were at the water's edge, and thoroughly demolished.

Changed patrol area to Kaimon Dake, since the lugger was only about 6 miles off Bono Misaki.

0535 Dived, Patrolled 3000-2000 yards off the beach.

1420 Dense fog. Surfaced 3000 yards off beach for a look around.

1430 Fog thinned—dived. No activity of any kind. Our carrier based fighters must have scoured the water front.

March 31

1200 31-12 N 130-08 E.

0518 Dived off Bono Misaki. Uneventful.

April 1, 1945

1200 Posit 31-18 N 129-12 E.

0214 SJ contact closing fast. Dived.

0220 Heard much echo-ranging in direction of Bono Misaki. Decided to patrol off shore while the area cools down for a day.

0549 Dived. Saw numerous planes flying low, searching the area.

April 2

1200 Posit 31-18 N 130-05 E.

Submerged patrol off Bono Misaki. Sighted various small craft.

1027 Surfaced in a fog—4000 yards off Bono Misaki light and air search radar station for a look around and a breath of fresh air. Combed the deck for several rattles JP had heard, and found several. While several men were over the side sawing off a loose side plate, the fog commenced to thin.

1055 Dived with the lighthouse coming into view.

THIRD ATTACK

Missed Standard Jap LST

Lat 31-15N Long 130-05E

1558 Sighted ship coming out of haze. Battle Stations. . . . Speed 16 knots by plot, angle on bow zero.

1600 The target was identified as a standard type, empty, Jap LST, riding extraordinarily high out of the water with lookouts all over him. Bow out of water for one tenth of his length. Sound, which had picked up fishermen all day before they came into sight, had great difficulty in picking up this target even when close. The cause was soon apparent when his screw appeared to be up in a well.

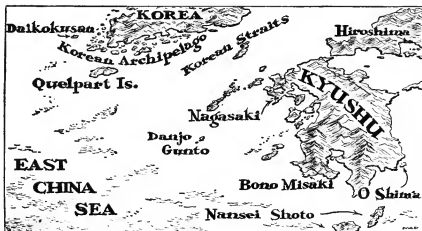
1602 Intended to fire bow tubes with sharp track, but the set-up was not good, range too short, dope still not definite. We had time for only three set-ups by time torpedo run was 500 yards. Changed mind and let target go by at 200 yards abeam, set up for deliberate stern shot at large track.

1604 Fired three MK 18-2 torpedoes aft. . . .

1605 Target saw the usual plumes of spray thrown up by torpedoes "whale spouting" at this shallow depth setting, and made radical manuevers

Officers and Senior Crew Members

Officers on board	Age this incl.	Duty	Qual	Battle Sta.
Lt. Comdr. G. L. STREET USN	31	10 CO	Com'd	A.O.
Lt. Comdr. E. L. BEACH USN	27	11 Exec. Nav.	Com'd	A.A.O.
Lt. E. G. CAMPELL USNR	29	8 Eng.	Subs	D.O.
Lt. E. PEABODY USNR	25	1 Torp. Gun	Subs	T.D.C.
Lt. (Jg) T. C. MARCUSE USNR	25	1 Radio, radar, sonar.	—	Radar, Sonar.
Lt. (Jg) J. J. DONNELLY USNR	24	1 Asst. Engr.	—	Plot #1
Lt. (Jg) R. E. RICHEY USN	23	1 Comms	—	Asst TDC.
Ensign D. R. JONES USN	31	11 1st Lt.	Enl.	Plot #2
Ensign W. N. DIETZEN USN	23	1 Und. Inst.	—	Recogn'n.
Ensign W. E. LEDFORD USN	24	8 Asst. Torp.	Enl.	Torp. Rms.
Average	26	5.3		
CPO's	Rate	Age	Patrols this incl.	
REMLEY, D. W.	CTM(PA)	28	8	
CLARK, A. W.	CEM(PA)	29	9	
THOMAS, E. F.	CMoMM(PA)	29	9	
FEW, W. H.	CQM(T)	28	8	
FICKEL, L. F.	CMoMM(T)	34	2	
WILLIAMS, C. W.	CPH(T)	25	5	
SNIDER, M. R.	CRM(T)	25	1	
MAX, C. A.	CMoMM(T)	29	4	
Average		28	5.75	
CREW (CPO's excluded)	Average age 23.25.	Average patrols 2.4	(this included).	



to avoid; spinning on his tail like a trained seal. No hits. The set-up checked perfectly . . . as the salvo was fired, and the Commanding Officer is certain the torpedoes passed awfully close, if indeed not actually under the target. Noted much running up and down the decks and belching of smoke on the target—we gave him a few bad moments at least.

1609 Sound reported torpedoes fading out—straight as a die.

1612 Four distant depth charges from the target.

In retrospect it is felt that we should have fired bow tubes, because the target could hardly have avoided a lish at 500 yards range even on a very sharp track. As it turned out, our stern tube set up checked exactly with the bow tube set up. Our dope was right, though we needed one more observation to check it. Result, three fish wasted, area alerted again, and we are dry aft. All hands keenly disappointed. Our only consolation—some other boat missed an LST also, not so long ago. On a good set up, he reported his torpedoes apparently ran under. Apparently their draft empty is exceedingly shallow.

April 3

1200 Posit 32-13 N 129-58 E.

Patrolled about 2000 yards off Oniki Saki. . . . Two Jap SCs-I depth-charged a whale 4000 yards from us. All morning they thrashed around. Suddenly at 5000 yards sighted a very small, very rusty engines-aft collier riding along on his "left hind check," with the same two patrol boats escorting. Bow out of water, 1/4 way aft, screw thrashing, lifeboat lowered half-way to water. Battle Stations. Started approach. Looks as though he's just been raised off the bottom and is being run through area as bait. This outfit has been suspicious all morning but didn't find us. Let this "pile of rust" go by. Needed a flying torpedo to hit him, anyway. This was an ideal gun target—except for the patrol boats ruining the party.

April 4

1200 Posit 32-12 N 129-57 E.

Uneventful patrol off Oniki Saki.

April 5

1200 Posit 32-28 N 128-45 E.

Uneventful patrol 2000-3000 yds, off Fuki E Shima. Two Jap-Special Submarine Chasers No. 1 came out of the harbor in the morning and picked our spot to come right over. They passed through our diving spot. . . . Evaded at 150 feet silent running. Same two returned late in afternoon.

April 6

1200 Posit 34-10 N 127-53 E.

Decided to investigate northern part of Area Nine for a change, now that we have been assigned it by *Spadefish*.

Dived off Shori To. Saw numerous fishing schooners drawing nets astern. Kept busy staying clear all during the day. Decided to try to capture one and take personnel back to base, since they ought to have information about the suspected anchorage at Reisue Kaiwan.

1918 Surfaced, going after one of the larger schooners.

1930 Having trouble coming alongside, and he isn't cooperating. Fired a 40mm shell through his mainsail. The shell exploded, making a big hole in the sail, .30 cal. machine-gun cut his mainsail halyard so he lowered his sails in short order.

1940 Boat alongside. We look huge by comparison.

Lieutenant Endicott Peabody II (All American, Harvard 1942) and Spence, H. W., GMIC jumped aboard, both armed to the teeth in terrifying fashion. The dignity of the boarding party was considerably shaken when Lt. Peabody landed in a pile of fish and skidded across the deck but efficiency was unimpaired. With many hoarse shouts and bursts of Tommy-gun fire, three thoroughly scared and whimpering fishermen were taken aboard. One Korean successfully hid by jumping over the side. Found out later he thought we were Japs, thus putting his days as "draft-dodger" to an end.

Spence, having routed the last Korean out of a locker in the cabin where he had hidden, and having picked up a clock and pipe as souvenirs, reported to Gunnery Officer that the search of the schooner below decks had been completed. . . . One Ko-

rean was accidentally slightly wounded in the left arm when he had to be persuaded by a burst of Tommy-gun fire in the water to climb back aboard.

1958 Cast off schooner. Set course through the passages of the Korean Archipelago at full speed, navigating by P.P.I. Passed through fishing fleet of about 50 schooners. Hoped to rout out some of the shipping our planes have reported hugging the coast here. Navigator now a qualified SJ operator.

April 7

1200 Posit Lat 34-33 N 125-20 E.

0443 Entered Maikotsu Suido.

0546 Detected. Experienced currents up to 5 knots, luckily mostly northerly, which was to our advantage. Conducted submerged patrol in Daikoku-san Gunto 2000 yds, from the beach. Heard distant pinging. Closed it, hoping for a convoy.

1652 Sighted two ships, later identified as a Chidori and a Patrol Frigate on an anti-submarine sweep. Avoided detection. Minimum range 7500 yards. Took several pictures of them with simultaneous ranges for Intelligence purposes. Their usual loud pinging. . . . was the first thing we picked up.

FOURTH ATTACK

Sunk 2800 Ton Sugar Able Sugar
Lat 34-35 N Long 125-20 E.

1755 Sighted ship proceeding up the island chain. Commenced approach. Because of increased confidence . . . made ready only two tubes. Executed standard submerged approach.

1852 Fired two MK 18-2 torpedoes. . . .

1853 Two terrific hits. Target sank instantly. Tried to get pictures, but target had sunk. Got one of the last three feet of his bow as it went under.

The target was a brand new TM (modified) Sugar Able Sugar type, 2800 tons, painted olive drab in color. He had a deck cargo of oil drums and a circular gun platform on bow.

1858 Surfaced 3800 yds. from the beach, broad daylight. Decided against adding to our prisoner list because of momentarily expected sunset air patrol and our recent Chidori and PF friends; so cleared the area, heading directly for a small fishing schooner as we did so. The occupants pitifully attempted to get away, but gave up and hauled down their sails; whereupon we slowed and passed close aboard. Only two people could be seen, a man and a woman, huddled pathetically together in the stern of the tiniest sailboat imaginable. Their relief and happiness were evident when they realized our intentions were peaceful, as we gesticulated violently astern to where the wreckage of the sunken ship was bobbing around. Two more men jumped out from un-

der the sail where they had hidden, and the little boat sailed joyfully off in search of loot. Prior to surfacing, the debris was examined through the periscope, and only oil drums, bits of wood and two survivors hanging on to a piece of wreckage could be seen.

April 8

1200 Posit 35-06 N 123-57 E.

0632 Surfaced after trim dive, intending to patrol on the surface in plotted traffic routes sixty miles west of Daikokusan To. Ran decks awash at slow speed, but wake could be seen several miles astern in glassy sea.

0732 Sighted plane, two engine bomber, directly in the sun, headed for us. Dived.

0735 Two bombs. One close explosion, one dud.

0825 Periscope depth for a look. Plane saw us with two feet of scope exposed, came in and strafed, dropping possibly another dud. Back to 200 feet, day's patrol ruined by getting spotted.

1025 6 distant bombs. He must have called in the wolves.

1506 Surfaced.

1535 Sighted plane, a two engine bomber, on horizon. Dived to periscope depth to keep an eye on him.

1545 Plane passed over the periscope. This lad is good! Went deep—all of 150' (200' depth of water).

1957 Surfaced. Cleared area. We now feel that staying on the surface and getting spotted by planes is a poor way to carry out our mission of inflicting the maximum possible damage on the enemy.

April 9

1200 Posit 36-50 N 123-57 E.

FIFTH ATTACK

Sunk 5000 Ton Transport (Attack 6A)

Missed 4000 Ton Freighter

(Attack 6B)

Lat 36-50 N Long 123-55 E

0920 Heard distant pinging bearing 270°T. Went to 52 ft. raised SD mast and at 0934 broadcast contact to *Spadefish*. No receipt.

0936 Sighted two large ships and three escorts! Commenced approach. The sea was glassy, sound conditions phenomenal, depth of water only 200 feet. . . . Poor conditions for a submerged attack, perfect for the opposition. . . . Shifted to No. 2 periscope until range is 5000 when we will try again. Mirage makes stadimeter ranging erratic.

The convoy is zigzagging radically, with one escort on the far flank, one on the near bow, one on the near quarter, with possibly more escorts. Ships identified as transport *Nikko Maru* (page 31, 208 J), leading, and freighter *Ramb II* (page 71, 208 J) in column astern. Speed does poor.

1015 Forced to expose four feet of periscope. . . . Maybe we are foolish, but intend to get good dope. Looking

down the escorts' throat with that much periscope out on this mirror smooth day made us feel like Lady Godiva in the marketplace. We will be most fortunate to get in undetected today. . . .

1022 Near escort, a big new frigate passed close aboard, pinging horribly. We swung into him, keeping our bow on him. Not detected. With our torpedoes set on six feet forward (dry aft), were ready to give him two if he showed any signs of acting up.

1025 Zig toward, giving *Nikko* a starboard 50 angle on the bow, and *Ramb* about starboard 40. Had our bow right on them ready for a zig either way. Set-up looks fine—now have time to wait a bit until track improves. Turn count on *Nikko* of 88 RPM.

1027 Up scope for firing bearings. This is necessary to double check our speed solution of 14 knots and to get a quick set-up on second ship. Fired 3 MK 18-2 torpedoes at *Nikko*. . . . range 1600 yards. . . . hoping to hit MOT, foremast, mainmast.

While firing saw a two-flag hoist go up on the *Nikko*. Shifted to *Ramb*, saw him to blocking same signal, got a quick set-up, and saw him start to swing right, decreasing the angle on the bow. Escort on his starboard quarter is headed our way due to zig so must shoot now or never, before hits in *Nikko* alert the whole convoy.

1029 Fired three MK 18-2 torpedoes at *Ramb*, range 1700. Had to set in a different angle on the bow for each shot. Target surprised us by at least a 150° course change, with hard over rudder. In the process he nicely combed the spread.

While firing at *Ramb*, heard and saw three hits on *Nikko*. Her decks were crowded with slant-eyes. The first, spread to hit MOT, hit in the after well, breaking her in two there, and stopping her screws, never to be heard again. The second spread forward, hit amidships, raising *Cain* generally, and she had already sunk to the water's edge when the third, spread aft, hit under the foremast blowing her bow off. The force of the first two hits was so terrific that they stopped her dead, causing the third MK 18, which normally would have missed aft, to hit.

Complete swabo on *Ramb*. We were still using the scope, with exposures varying from 4 to 12 seconds and might have been sighted. . . .

1030 Commenced evasion. The nearest escort, a Patrol Frigate of the *Mikura* class, had turned during the second firing, and was bearing down fast. Headed deep (bottom 200 feet) and commenced receiving a deliberate depth charging by two echo ranging escorts. The third escort had apparently gone off with *Ramb*. The most persistent escort was the frigate which

had passed close aboard just before firing.

1236 We are now really boxed. One set of screws stays on the beam, running slowly and pinging and most probably listening. The other two are making alternate runs. . . . Heard many more depth charges, more and more distant. Total for the day, 83. Their retiring search curve, punctuated with depth charges, fortunately did not locate us.

1422 Struck bottom momentarily and heard a peculiar noise on the port shaft. Subsequently while making high surface speeds a pronounced vibration became evident. Ran a test for silence, which was satisfactory, but investigation for bent propeller blades will be necessary during refit.

2049 Surfaced. Transmitted results of attack to Group Commander in *Spadefish*.

2100 Radar contact on several escort vessels equipped with Jap 10 Cm radar. Transmitted contact report to *Spadefish*. Closed to see if they were escorting any ship. Search negative; so transmitted results to *Spadefish*.

April 10, 1945

Posit 34-48 N 124-45 E.

Uneventful submerged patrol in the approaches to Daikokusan To. After surfacing started back through Korean Archipelago to patrol north of Quel-part Island next day.

April 11, 1945

1200 Posit 33-30 N 126-25 E.

Uneventful submerged patrol 4000 yds. off Saisho To. Sighted dawn patrol of two float type biplanes shortly after diving. Commenced approach on two large ships hull down—much disappointed to have come out of the mirage in the form of two small "YMS" mine sweeps. Approached and took pictures of them and their sweep gear over their stems.

April 12, 1945

1200 Posit 32-24 N 124-42 E.

Uneventful submerged patrol on Shanghai-Saisho To route. Sighted three horn-type floating mines during the day. Had all bridge watch standers take a good look at them through the scope. Took pictures of one in H.P. very close aboard.

1930 Surfaced, headed for Shanghai at high speed to scout Shanghai-Quelpart line.

2230 Stationed radar tracking party to investigate two ships. . . . Sent contact report to submarines in area. . . . After two hours of hard work and closing to investigate, determined our contacts to be two A/S vessels patrolling the traffic route. Sent third and last message to area submarines and exchanged information with Trutta on patrol positions for the next day.

April 13, 1945

1200 Posit 32-40 N 125-14 E.

0612 Returning from Shanghai sweep at high speed. Sighted dawn

plane and dived for the day. Upon surfacing heard the melancholy news of the death of our Commander-in-Chief.

Intend to make investigation of a reported anchorage on the north shore of Quelpart during darkness. Our six MK 14-3A torpedoes left forward will be ideal for this work.

SEVENTH ATTACK

SUNK AMMUNITION SHIP
8000-10,000 Tons (est) Attack 6A
SUNK FRIGATE MIKURA
Class 1500 Tons Attack 6B
SUNK FRIGATE MIKURA
Class 1500 Tons Attack 6C
Lat 33-25 N Long 125-50 E

April 14

1200 Posit 32-35 N 125-50 E.

0000 Approaching Quelpart Island northwestern side.

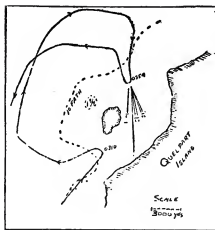
0029 Radar contact. Patrol boat. Went to tracking stations and worked around him. Sighted him at 4500 yards—long and low. No evidence of radar until we were nearly around. . . . The patrol was evidently suspicious, probably because we came too close, but soon went back to sleep.

Continued working up the anchorage.

0223 Radar contact. Another patrol craft, bigger than the other. Avoided by going close inshore. This vessel was patrolling back and forth in front of the anchorage, had radar, and was pinging. . . . He also became suspicious, apparently, and headed for our point of nearest approach to him. However, our tactic of heading inshore confused him (as we no doubt merged with his land pips) and he continued routine patrolling.

During the whole of the ensuing action, except while actually firing torpedoes, this patrol boat was kept on the TDC and both plots. He was always a mental hazard, and potentially a real one. The only chart that was of any use was the Jap "Zoomie" chart labelled "Japan Aviation Chart, Southern-Most Portion of Chosen (Korea) No. V3-36." No soundings inside the ten-fathom curve in the harbor and approaches were shown. Hoped the place wasn't mined and that none of the five shorebased radars reported on Quelpart were guarding the harbor.

0240 Battle Stations. Approached anchorage from the south along the ten-fathom curve within 1200 yards of the shoreline. Took "single ping" fathometer sounding every 3 to 5 minutes. The smell of cattle from the beach was strong. Frigate could not see well enough to distinguish ships from shoreline in the harbor, though a couple of darker spots in the early morning mist looked promising—as did, indeed, the presence of two patrolling escort vessels where none had previously been seen several nights



before during night patrol in this area.

0310 Completed investigation this side of the anchorage from 1200 yards away. There may be ships there, but cannot see well enough to shoot. Started around the small island off the anchorage, staying as close as possible. The patrol vessel by this time was paralleling us 7000 yards off shore, still not overly suspicious, but annoying. Executive Officer on bridge could see him now and then.

0330 Having completed circuit of the small island, started in from northern side, cutting in across the ten fathom curve.

0340 Bridge made out the shapes of ships in the anchorage. Sound picked up a second "pinger"—this time in the harbor. Still too far, (4500 yards and not sure of what we saw). Patrol heading this way. Sounding 11 fathoms. Current setting us on beach. Decided to get in closer and have this over with. A/A 2/3. (Radar Officer confirmed sharp pips of ships in anchorage).

0350 Bridge definitely could see ships. For the first time put targets on TDC, with Zero speed and TBT bearings. With assistance of TBT and PPI, SJ commenced ranging on largest ship—very difficult to distinguish from the mass of shore pips, and gave range of 2500 yards. Sounding 9 fathoms. Still getting set on. Land loomed close aboard on both sides. Patrol still not overly alerted, passing about 6000 yards away, pinging loudly, outboard of us. Land background our saving grace. Secured taking "single ping" fathometer readings; if those ships can get in here, so can we. Both 40 mm guns are all loaded and ready with gun crews. Since it is too shallow to dive, we will have to shoot our way out if boxed in.

0355 Exec on TBT picked out three targets, and got on largest. Backed down and lay-to. Bow toed slightly out to combat the set.

0355-30 Fired one torpedo as a sighting-in shot to dope out current using TBT bearings, range by SJ

2300 yards, gyro angle 344.30, track 90. Captain went to the bridge to get in on the fun, up there. Missed to the right. Torpedo hit beach and exploded, proving there was no torpedo net.

0359 Fired one torpedo aimed at left edge of the largest target, to correct for current effect. Wake headed straight for the target.

0359-22 Fired another torpedo aimed same as the previous one—straight as a die. Exec's keen shooting eye looked right on tonight.

0401-05 A tremendous beautiful explosion. A great mushroom of white blinding flame shot 2000 feet into the air. Not a sound was heard for a moment, but then a thunderous roar flattened our ears against our heads. The jackpot, and no mistake! In this shattering convulsion we had no idea how many hits we had made, but sincerely believe it was two. In the glare of the fire, *Tirante* stood out, in her light camouflage, like a snowman in a coal-pit. But, more important, silhouetted against the flame were two escort vessels, both instantly obvious as fine new frigates of the *Mikura* Class. The Captain instinctively ordered "Right full rudder, all ahead flank," and as quickly belayed it. Steadied up to "pick off" the two frigates.

0402 Fired one torpedo at the left-hand frigate, using TBT bearings and radar ranges.

0402-16 Fired another torpedo at the same target.

0403 Fired last torpedo at the right-hand frigate.

0404 Now let's really get out of here!

0404-20 One beautiful hit in the left-hand frigate. The ship literally exploded, her bow and stern rising out of water, and the center disappearing in a sheet of fire. Must have hit her magazines. Very satisfying to watch, though not the equal of the previous explosion, of course. Possibly two hits in him.

0404-40 A hit on the other PF also—right amidsthips! No flame this time, other than the explosion, but a great cloud of smoke immediately enveloped her and she disappeared. We jubilantly credit ourselves with three ships sunk with at least four, probably five, hits for six fish. Not the slightest doubt about any of the three ships. Now only one torpedo left aboard. Immediately reloaded it. . . .

The patrolling escort had now increased speed and turned toward the anchorage. Once more we pulled our trick of slipping undetected along the shore. As we left the gutted anchorage behind a third PF could be seen standing out at slow speed. He did not, however, come out after us, but stayed, watching the fire. So we just ran down the coast of Quelpart headed

for the open sea. Transmitted results of attack to submarines in area so they could avoid the certain A/S measures to come.

The large ship which exploded was, in the Commanding Officer's mind, unquestionably a heavily laden ammunition ship, or possibly a tanker loaded with aviation gas. Not much can be said about her type and size, but in the sudden glare of the explosion she appeared to be a large engines-aft vessel, of from 8000 to 10,000 tons. In the light of her own fire she was huge.

As we rounded Quelpart's southwestern tip, the glare from the anchorage could still be seen above the dark hills, and a heavy smoke cloud hung like a shroud over the entire western end of the island.

0513 Radar and sight contact with the other patrol, which we had avoided initially. This time he was alert. . . . Too light to evade surfaced, so dived and evaded submerged. He came over to the spot where we had dived and dropped a pattern. Many distant depth charges or bombs were heard and planes were sighted all day. This area will be hot tonight.

2043 Surfaced, following three aircraft bombs not too far away.

2148 Dived for a plane.

2245 Surfaced.

April 15

1200 Posit 31-07 N 128-30 E

0145 Dived for a plane.

0228 Surfaced. Received orders to return to Midway for refit.

0655 Sighted Danjo Gunto, distance 20 miles.

0710 Sighted two periscopes on port bow about 2500 yards away. Avoided at full speed. Why did the Jap use two periscopes—no answer for that one. . . . Periscopes were raised and lowered several times.

0909 Sighted possible mine.

0919 Stayed on surface and watched two heavy bomber type planes go by, headed for Sasabo. Could have been ours.

1000 Dived for two large patrol planes who evidently were not going by.

1322 While searching continuously with both periscopes just prior to surfacing, sighted another large patrol plane circling about 5 miles away. Stayed down.

1615 Surfaced.

1737 Sighted heavily barnacled mine. Shot at same for 30 minutes, with 40 mm., 50 cal. and carbine—unable to sink it. Finally secured.

1832 Another mine.

1840 Another plane. Dived.

2017 Surfaced.

2245 Another plane went by. Did not dive.

April 16, 1945

0123 Passed through Nansei Shoto chain.

0537 Dived for a plane.

0705 Surfaced.

0854 Sighted dead Jap soldier. (Very dead). Wearing kapok life jacket, helmet and leggings. Flooded down and hauled him alongside to examine pockets for notebooks, papers, etc., for our Intelligence Service, but corpse was decomposing, so secured.

1017 Sighted 2 PBM's headed for us. Fired one mortar recognition signal followed by another. PBM's still coming in. Suddenly heard one plane say: "Look at that ship down there! Wonder if it's friendly?" Promptly opened up and set him straight. Situation eased.

1043 Another dead Jap soldier similar to first. (Dead).

1647 Sighted three Jap flyers roosting on the float of their overturned plane. (Jake) Maneuvered to pick them up. Put our bow (well flooded down) against the float, but they defiantly straight-armed it and showed no desire to come aboard. Kept our boarding party on cigarette deck behind armor plate. The pilot, identified by goggles and a flight cap, had something hidden in his right hand and suddenly defiantly threw a lighted aircraft flare aboard, in return for which Lt. Commander Beach parted his hair with an accurately placed rifle shot. Our bridge .30 and .50 cal. machine gunners had to be firmly told not to shoot. At first, it was thought that the flare might be some kind of bomb or hand grenade. But this was obviously not so, and the flare was kicked over the side by the Gunnery Officer. The pilot kept haranguing his two crewmen. "Things at an impasse. Brought one of our Koreans topside to persuade them to come aboard."

The three flyers suddenly jumped overboard and swam away from their wrecked plane; so Lt. Commander Beach with a few rifle shots gained the distinction of sinking a Jap plane single-handed. That left the three Japs with no refuge. The pilot went off one way and the two enlisted men another. All had kapok lifejackets on. Brought one of the enlisted men alongside. At first he seemed willing to be rescued when yelled at by the Korean. Then evidently thought better of it, screamed "Kill, kill, kill!" at us, ducked out of his lifejacket and swam away. He was observed to duck his head under water several times and swallow salt water, until finally he failed to reappear. One suicide for the Emperor.

Brought the second enlisted man alongside. He was willing to be rescued after more cajoling by our Korean through a megaphone, and assisted our boarding party in bringing him aboard. Undressed him completely on deck searching for hidden knives and hand grenades. No lethal weapons found.

Brought the pilot alongside. He had shed his lifejacket—evidently thinking of suicide. He seemed conscious and in good control until close aboard, when he appeared to lose consciousness, and became helpless. Lieut. Peabody and Spence, GMIC, dived over the side with sheath knives and heaving lines tied around them, grabbed the inert Jap and boosted him aboard over the bow. Undressed him also with same result. He was still inert when examined below decks by the Chief Pharmacist's Mate, whose verdict was that the man was shamming.

This was substantiated by the fact that, when startled by the general-announcing equipment, he jerked upright, then relaxed into insensibility again. Evidently, having been brought aboard while unable to help it, his honor, or something, had been saved. He apparently had not had the nerve to carry out his own suicide order.

Incidentally, although nothing of much value other than a notebook was found in the pockets of the enlisted man, the pilot's pockets contained a notebook, a visiting card, quite a lot of Japanese money. . . . It is considered that he is quite a fellow, if not, indeed, an officer.

Isolated all prisoners after giving them a hot shower and dunnages.

2200 Decoded a message addressed to U.S.S. *Spadefish*, telling him to look for one of our aviators down 200 miles away from us. We had reason to believe that the *Spadefish* was behind us. . . . Accordingly went to full speed and headed for the spot. Informed Force Commander and received prompt affirmative reply.

April 17

Searching all day for downed pilot. Spoke *Cero*, joined her on scouting line for several hours, and communicated with *Gato*, both also searching. A passing B-29 helped us for a short time by checking position of survivor reported by a plane. No luck. Area thoroughly covered. *Cero* and *Gato* departed. Contacted DD *Fanning*, also searching for pilot and told her our search plan. Requested authority from Force Commander to continue search another day.

April 18

Continued spiral rectangle search all night, firing Very's star every hour and blowing whistle every 5 minutes.

0300 L Received orders to discontinue search, so reluctantly resumed course for Midway.

April 19

0225 L Sighted lights on horizon. Investigated the contact, which developed into a correctly lighted hospital ship, on course 330°T at 8 knots, evidently headed from Chichi Jima Retto to Honshu. Avoided.

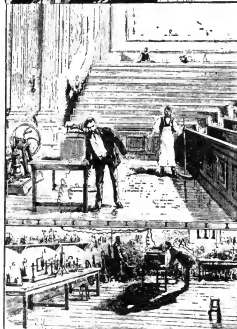
April 25 (plus 12 zone time)

Arrived Midway.



The BELL

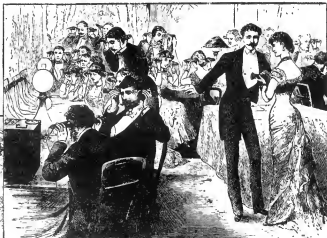
This month the hundredth anniversary of Alexander Graham Bell's birth lends special interest to old prints which illustrate the early days of the telephone. It is worth noting too, that along with the telephone, inventors were groping toward radio, "Musak" and in one artist's fancy, television.



Predecessor of radio! November, 1881, at Paris, the transmission of operas from the stage of the Grand Opera into the home through telephone was inaugurated. The first to make use of this novel method of entertainment was French President Jules Grévy. But it was soon suspended because of the unsatisfactory musical reception.

Old Prints from Three Lions, Schoenfeld Collection.

(At left:) A successful experiment on the telephone by Bell in the auditorium of the University of Boston, 1875



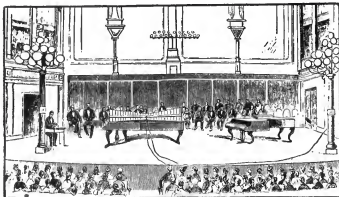
A by-product of the new invention, the string telephone—sold for 50 centimes on streets of Paris in 1878. It was a novelty consisting of two receivers attached with string. Crude vocal transmission was possible if string was pulled tight.



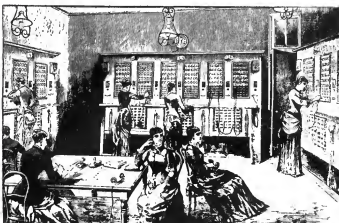
(At left:) Chicago, installed the first police telephone booth early as 1881.
(At right:) Visitors to an exposition at Paris, 1881, hear the new miracle of the telephone.



CENTENNIAL

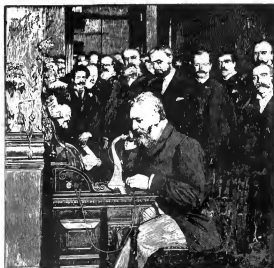


Professor Gray's Telephone Concert in New York, 1877. While experimenting in 1875 with the idea of sending musical notes by wire, the American inventor Elisha Gray hit upon the idea of transmitting the human voice; and early in 1876 filed with the patent office a caveat for such an invention. Bell's final patent had been registered just a few hours before.

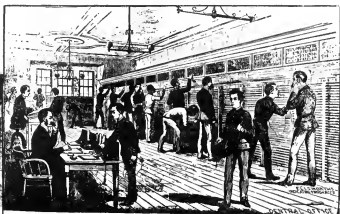


(Above:) First women telephone operators! Interior of the telephone exchange in the Rue Lafayette, Paris, 1883. Service in Paris was rendered by 33 telephone girls.

(Below:) An early prophecy of television—the photophone! The telephone, inspired the famous artist Du Maurier to develop his ideas of the future of the contraption, in 1880. The lady fears scandal from this intrusion.

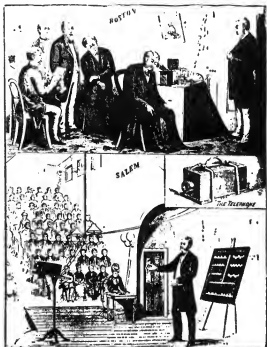


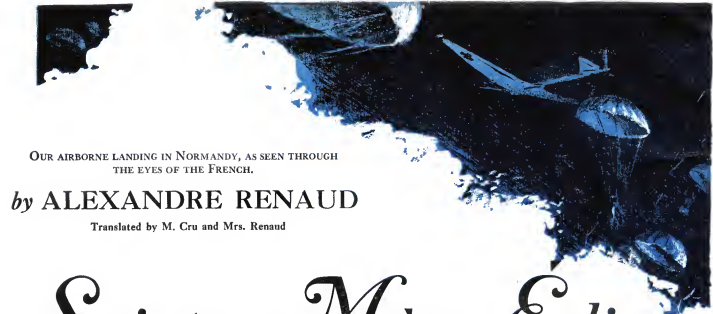
Bell opening the Chicago-New York long distance line in 1892.—The landmarks in telephone history were: Boston to Cambridge, 2 miles, 1876; Boston to Providence, 45 miles, 1882; Boston to New York, 235 miles, 1884; New York to Chicago, 900 miles, 1892.



The First Switchboards! Telephone Exchange in New York used uniformed male operators in 1880.

(Below:) First long-distance telephone, Salem to Boston, February 12, 1877. A short speech shouted into a telephone in Boston was distinctly audible in Salem.





OUR AIRBORNE LANDING IN NORMANDY, AS SEEN THROUGH
THE EYES OF THE FRENCH.

by ALEXANDRE RENAUD

Translated by M. Cru and Mrs. Renaud

Sainte Mère Eglise

HERE is a narrative that smells of power, that retains the uproar of shells and bombs, through whose short, swift, exact sentences the battle of Sainte Mère Eglise unrolls before your eyes as closely and as realistically as it did for Alexandre Renaud.

For this writer of quiet and exact prose is above all a painter; he has the ability, difficult always, of bringing to life these short scenes of combat with their movement, their color, their smoke, and their sky-shattering explosions. If you close your eyes after reading some of these pages, you will really see (as I saw myself) the paratrooper who fell into the heart of a flaming house, the corpse of the young woman whom the living, taking refuge in the bottom of a ditch, could not bury; the German captain who went to his death alone. . . .

I have not had the pleasure of meeting the author of this book; but I can take the liberty of telling him how strongly he has stirred in me sentiments which are both French and Norman. I was not far from him at the time of the battle of Sainte Mère Eglise, since orders from our secret organization had already sent me to Normandy to take up my duties as Commissioner of the Republic. With M. Neuville and Mlle. de Branche, two colleagues of the Resistance Movement, I made long trips across the province, making ready for the day of liberation.

Then when the long-awaited landing came, it took place on the Norman coast, where we had centers of refuge. The frantic German deception burst at the same time, both in the Führer's communiqués and in the columns of the Vichy press; and from the first day the newspapers used the sweet name Sainte Mère Eglise, which evoked for so many of us the charming memory of a happy Normandy. They told us of violent battles there between the soldiers of the Wehrmacht and the American paratroopers; hourly the BBC informed us of the developments of the action; and we kept our eyes glued on maps of the Channel coast, hoping to see the enlargement, like a drop of oil, of that tiny point where all our hopes were pinned: Sainte Mère Eglise.

I know now that at that same moment in that same little Norman city, a brave, calm and patriotic man was noting all the incidents, all the actions of the drama; in order to transcribe them one future day with the fidelity of a historian.

I know now how they made the aerial invasion which we hardly dared believe; I have heard the tumult of the explosions; I have seen the light of the flames; and I have learned how the valor of our Allies finally triumphed over the force and bravado of our enemies.

France knows the story, thanks to Alexandre Renaud, a careful and devoted writer who luckily for all of us has retained and recorded the history of one of the most tragic episodes of our liberation.

May he be thanked for it by those of the resistance whom we have brought forth, by those patriots whom we have remaining, and by all French people who will find in his book a great lesson of energy and patience. And I wish to end this introduction by adding to his my own

And something, like enormous confetti, came out of their bellies and dropped rapidly to earth.





Illustrated by
Arthur Harper

homage to those who were the heroes of that battle; to those American boys who fell, at a signal, from the sky and so many of whom, as he says, "Came to our land to make the supreme sacrifice."

For is it not true, Alexandre Renaud, that no Frenchman (and we Normans less than any) will forget the two cemeteries of Sainte Mère Eglise where, with General Theodore Roosevelt in the center, so many young soldiers of the United States are sleeping?

Henri Bourdeau de Fontenay

TO THE CHILDREN OF SAINTE MÈRE EGLISE

A party organized this summer for the Children of Sainte Mère Eglise by the American troops of the Ninth Air Force of La Londe Airbase. I told our youngsters that they had lived through the most extraordinary fairy tale that anyone could imagine or dare write for them.

During a lovely night of June, by dim moonlight, by the flames of a fire and with the nerve-wracking ringing of the fire-alarm in their ears, they saw, floating in the sky, hundreds of men with blackened faces, armed with machine-guns and knives, for the do-or-die mission of getting a toe-hold on the German fortress.

These children had seen, around them, the fight, the slaughter, the unbelievable death of their parents and their loved ones, in the Armageddon of bursting shells and whizzing tracer bullets.

They had also seen on the sixth of June, on their roofs, in the trees, the large white, red, green and yellow-gold silk parachutes, undulating in the sun like huge cocoons empty of their butterflies. They saw them, finally, being used as shrouds for our dead.

I would like very much that they would keep ever green in their hearts, with the help of this documentary book, the remembrance of this historical event, of which Sainte Mère Eglise was the scene of action.

When we, the grown-ups, are no more, I would like that those youngsters, having become in turn grandfathers and grandmothers, gather each year their little ones in the month of June, to tell them of the great drama of Sainte Mère Eglise.

Time will have done its work. The real actions will have faded away. Some other stories will be made up throughout the years by the popular imagination, and as the years go by, the future tellers of tales will embellish this story with fantastic and wonderful new facets, without fear of contradiction, which will make colorless our *Chansons de Geste* and the Tale of the Trojan Horse!

THE FIRST AMERICAN BRIDGEHEAD IN FRANCE

I

FROM AN AIRPLANE flying over the Cherbourg Peninsula, Sainte Mère Eglise must appear as a small township collected along Highway 13 between Paris and Cherbourg, twenty-two miles from the latter town. In the eyes of the plane passenger, nothing distinguishes it from numerous other little Norman cities framed in leafy bowers and surrounded on all sides by green pastures sprinkled with apple trees and lined with great elms.

In the mind of a traveler coming from our capital and going to Cherbourg to take the liner back to England or America, the striking feature about Sainte Mère Eglise is not the plain houses, built without any plan in the course of centuries, but the great Old World square extending beneath the ample shade of chestnut and plane trees. On this square, which offers a fine perspective, our ancestors had started in olden times—about the Thirteenth Century—to build a church in the Roman style of their day. But in that far-away period, time was of little consequence. One built for the pleasure of building, and without worrying whether the workman would live to see his work finished.

The men of those days knew that the heartfelt wish of their children and grandchildren would be to carry on with the job. And that is how the old church was finished nearly four centuries later. Each generation left upon it the imprint of its genius, and the monument which had been begun in Roman style was finished in Gothic. One day this house of God was surmounted,

like nearly all its sister buildings in Normandy, with a little belfry called "*clocher a batière*"* and there must have been great rejoicing in Sainte Mère Eglise, but nobody can tell for certain now, as all the old archives were destroyed by the Revolution, and the mold of time.

Ten yards from the church, slim and erect upon its granite steps, stands a Roman military milestone. When it was young, it used to show the Legions of Caesar that a great stage had been reached in the pacification of Gaul. Set up, surely, at a then important road junction, it witnessed the passing of William's ironclad knights journeying to the beaches to embark for England, with their heavy towers, primitive ancestors of our modern tanks, and their catapults.

The country surrounding Sainte Mère Eglise is of unusual fertility. There the grass grows lush and green, winter and summer alike. It is the heart of Cotentin; and Cotentin is one of the richest regions in France. Herds of cows, of selected race and renowned for their milk, and fine saddle horses which are the glory of the Vincennes and Longchamp race-courses, graze in fields called "*clos*," surrounded by thick hedges. . . .

The Germans first arrived in Sainte Mère Eglise on June 18th, 1940, without firing a shot. As the bridges over the marshes of Sainte-Come-du-Mont, between Sainte Mère Eglise and Carentan had been blown up, the invaders, under heavy fire from French marines, had had to withdraw toward the Periers and La-Haye-du-Puits roads, and go round by the west of the Peninsula.

The Germans immediately occupied our houses, leaving the inhabitants only the minimum space. Then, during the next few weeks, the Teutonic army, formidably armed and impeccably disciplined, was massed opposite the shores of England. The regiments, composed of superb men, always cleaned and well groomed, would pass proudly, machine-like, in step, singing at the top of their voices:

"*Wir fahren gegen England!*" "In three weeks," said the soldiers, "England will be *Kaput*." The three weeks went by, and yet more, and the great attack was announced for the middle of September.

The troops stationed in Sainte Mère Eglise tried, by means of great drinking bouts and hearty meals, to stifle that almost mysterious terror which assailed them all at the thought of going to sea. And still the assault did not take place. October passed, and there was less and less talk of attacking.

"*Glou, glou, glou,*" the little boys sometimes shouted at these men, incomparable soldiers, yet pitiful sailors. (The noise was an imitation of the sound of air escaping from a drowning man's lungs.)

Other children, ironically inclined, would march alongside the detachments, copying the "goose-step." Sometimes the sentinels would run after them, but by the end of 1940 this grotesque step, finally reduced to ridicule, had ceased to be used in the German field army.

The foreign occupation began, with its troubles, worries and sadness. On the Town Hall Square, a huge swastika flag was hoisted. On the walls, the Ortskommandantur had notices put up in German and French, announcing the execution of patriots guilty of "having acted against the security of the army of occupation."

The German order reigned.

II

THE WINTER OF 1943-'44 had been uncommonly calm in Sainte Mère Eglise. During the autumn the German troops had left the vicinity, at first imperceptibly, then in growing numbers. There remained on the coast a light cordon of small isolated strong-points, communicating by telephone and motorcyclists. Prices soared; the

*In the shape of a packsaddle.

black market became king. The Germans bought; the civilians bought; they bought anything for themselves and also for their friends in the big towns where supplies were scarce. The only thing to remind us of the War was the news which came through from time to time of Allied bombings against the aerodrome of Cherbourg or around Valognes.

Occasionally, when the sky was blue, some isolated planes would circle above us, leaving long vapor trails.

"They're coming to mark out the field," said a football player. Others declared they were making V's in the sky, and that they were just Frenchmen using up gas to come and give us a salute. The next day the children would return from the fields loaded with packets of little strips, silver on one side and black on the other side. At other times, the roads and the crofts were sprinkled with Allied or imitation Allied leaflets.

Every evening the BBC would bring us from London the echoes of the Russian victories and the repeated assurances of a deliverance soon to come:

"Keep away from the coast, from strategic key-points, from big factories," it told us. But these things had been repeated for so long that many began to despair. "A great offensive is on the way," they had cried back in 1943.

Then Churchill had declared: "Before the leaves of autumn fall, the Germans will be attacked on new fronts and the battle will be waged to the south, to the west and to the north."

IN OCTOBER we had sadly watched the leaves of the chestnut trees in our square turn yellow, then descend slowly to earth. Then our plane trees had in their turn revealed their naked skeletons. The winter rains had begun in November, as had also the great storms which every year swept up the last leaves and scalloped the waves. The most optimistic said: "A landing is impossible; it will be for next spring."

The BBC no longer affirmed anything. In the course of lengthy talks, it attempted to prove to us that amphibious operations were so intricate that it was necessary to give the Allies plenty of time to get ready.

The Germans would snicker:

"The Tommies will never be ready."

In the wet, cold night skies of the Norman winter, the only passers-by were the ducks, the geese, the curlews and sometimes, very high up, large formations of aircraft carrying their bombs to the towns, to the factories or to the railroad yards of Germany.

However, in February 1944, divers troop movements took place in the Cherbourg Peninsula. At night we would hear from time to time a convoy going up toward the top of the Peninsula. One evening, on coming out of the movies, we saw a long line of horse-drawn carts driven by French peasants and escorted by Germans. These peasants came from very far away, and had been requisitioned to take troops and materials into the north of the department, probably to La Hague. It was the first time we had seen such a mass requisition. In March some German troops arrived in Sainte Mère Eglise. They were a group of anti-aircraft gunners in the grayish uniform of the Air Force. They picked their billets according to their fancy, without consulting anyone. They threw the schoolmistress out, and took over the school. Otherwise they behaved well.

They were Austrians from the Tyrol, mostly old, nicely tucked away in a quiet little unit. Their job was the supply of munitions to the coast. They had no guns, only trucks, most of them wood-burning, which were garaged all day beneath the trees in the square.

At night we would see them go, with all lights out, return and leave yet again.

The major commanding the flak crews, a man of fifty-eight and a music critic at home, was more concerned with having a good time than with waging war.



Thanks to the parachute, I hauled in the paratrooper.

A few days after the arrival of the anti-aircraft unit, a German battalion came in its turn to camp in the town. These men were terrible—well trained, disciplined, hard on us and on themselves, they constituted a real force such as we had not seen for a long time.

Two weeks later, suddenly, the battalion left its billets in Sainte Mère Eglise for the little neighboring villages of Gambosville, Fauville and La Cosquerie. Highway 13 from Paris to Cherbourg was, it appeared, dangerous. Then the commandeering began. Every day they needed horses, carts, cars for the German mail, for the troops, for outings, for the Carenten railroad station, for food supply in Baupre, for the hospital at Pont l'Abbe. The Germans demanded, but paid. The troops almost every day and night went out on maneuvers. Sometimes they went through the villages armed to the teeth, with branches disguising helmets, carts, horses and guns.

One Lieutenant Zitt, a clumsily built giant, was made officer commanding the town. He called me to Gambosville in order to tell me briefly, in five points, what he expected of me, as mayor of the town, and that turned



Farther on, a soldier was being fed by a peasant.

out to be absolute obedience to all his wishes. At the same time, along with the daily requisitioning of horses, they would also command labor details. The whole of Cotentin Peninsula had to be fortified by successive rings of field defenses. Around Sainte Mère Eglise we had to install the second line under the direction of N.C.O.'s from the German engineers. Actually very few went to work, and most of the work consisted of eating and drinking. It is true, however, that the German N.C.O.'s, except in a few cases, never insisted and punished nobody.

On April 17th, a German Engineers colonel came to the Mayor's office to order special details for the day after next: These were to set up in all the fields, except the very small ones, young trees cut from the neighboring hedges and stripped of their branches. They were to put them in holes three feet deep like trees in an orchard, but sixty-five feet apart. The trunks were to emerge ten feet above ground. The idea was then to run barbed wire from one tree to another.

"Your own interest," the Colonel naïvely told us, "is to work quickly. When the work is done, it will be impossible for Tommy planes and gliders to land, and your country will be saved from invasion. If you do not do this, you understand that your towns and your fields will be laid waste."

"So you see," they told me that evening, "they all seem to think the Allied attack will start in Normandy."

We could not hide a skeptical smile, for very few of us believed in such a possibility.

Well, the work on these obstacles began. A few of the posts went up each day, and cows came and rubbed their shaggy hides against them luxuriously. And slowly the trees were cut, stripped of their branches and transferred to their new dwelling places. The weeks went by, and yet the work was never finished.

It was also on April 17th that the Vichy order came through to give up all radio sets at the town halls. People of Normandy were no longer to listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and the direst penalties were threatened against those who did not comply.

Two days later Zitt sent for me from Gambosville. Half lying in an armchair, with his feet upon a table, he did not ask me to sit down. He demanded immediately all the radio sets which were stored in the town-hall attic.

"Those sets," I replied, "are the property of Frenchmen and will remain the French property as long as I am the mayor of this district."

At that, Zitt purpled with anger, started shouting: "If the Tommies come here," he cried furiously, beside him-

self with rage, "your first delay in executing my orders will mean 'that'!"—and he made the gesture of firing. I answered that I perfectly understood what he meant, and that I was quite used to that kind of talk and had been for a long time. . . .

I was thrown out. But the radio sets stored at Sainte Mère Eglise's town-hall remained.

As I returned home, I reflected: "The dirty dog believes in the invasion of Cotentin too."

For the next week, it was continuous friction between Zitt and myself. I never saw him again. He would send over his N.C.O.'s and sometimes his privates to carry on official business. Several times I refused to carry out his orders because the papers were not signed. The N.C.O.'s would return with Zitt's signature, and at the same time they would show me the branch from which they would hang me when the Tommies came.

There was only one among them who was polite. He was an intelligent and mild Feldwebel. He sometimes took it upon himself to lighten the fatigue duties of the Frenchmen. What has happened to him? . . . I do not know. I have forgotten his name. I knew he was an Austrian, and that he had traveled all over the world before the War.

Hurriedly, on May 10th at eight P.M., they came and asked me for ten conveyances; but at the same time all the conveyances and all the men available in the occupied villages were requisitioned. I thought at first that it was for night maneuvers, and I protested violently in the name of the Hague Convention; but half an hour later I discovered what was going on: Zitt and his ruffians were leaving for Vauville.

It was a very heavy weight off my shoulders, and I believe I can say that if these troops had remained in Sainte Mère Eglise until D-Day, the great adventure of the beginning of June would have ended quite differently for the town and for myself.

MAY IS NOW DRAWING TO A CLOSE. The leaves of the trees on the church square are a lovely tender green, and the chestnut trees have produced their cones of flowers.

The sky is a turquoise blue such as is rarely seen in Cotentin, and it has been that way for two months. The marshes which the Germans flooded are draining, despite the efforts of the engineers to keep them at high level.

All around, especially at evening time, the air is beginning to be loaded with what seems to be pestilential emanations. So must it have been in the Middle Ages and up to the time of the great drainage ditches: in those days the peasants, decimated by malaria, fled the country.

Workers now digging trenches at Beuzeville la Bastille say that myriads of mosquitoes have invaded the grass fields and the hedges. At Saint Come's bridge, when the sun goes down, they form such dense swarms that they darken the sky.

What are the English doing?

Are they going to wait for the leaves to fall in order to act?

The air attacks become more and more numerous; the bridge of Beuzeville la Bastille has been bombed time and again; so has that of Les Moitiers en Baupré. And yet these are only two small local bridges which permit crossing the marshes from east to west. They would be of paramount importance only in case of an attack against the peninsula, to prevent the arrival of German reinforcements.

Some prophecy that the Allies might well make feint attacks on the Peninsula to distract the attention of the Germans, but nothing can prevent us from believing that the big attack, if it comes, will be made in the north, toward Dieppe, Boulogne and Dunkerque.

Last night, in the Manor field, small leaflets of about ten pages fell from the sky. They recount the general directions already given out, but they also describe with

explanatory drawings the uniform of British and American paratroops, the shape of jeeps and Allied tanks, the small light ones, and the big Churchills and Shermans.

"So what?" somebody says to me. "These leaflets are printed by the thousand, and the point at which they fall proves nothing. The same leaflets were probably dropped in the north and on Saint-Nazaire."

And I find this remark sensible.

Orders are issued to the workers for the first week of June. The trenches around Sainte Mère Eglise are almost finished. They are the usual type of trench, and they worm their way in and out of the "close" between the apple trees with the well-known breastworks exactly similar to those we used to make behind the lines in 1916-'17.

The placing of trees (Rommel's candles, as we used to call them) also goes on, but with increasing slackness. The German command does not seem very energetic. With the means of punishment at its disposal, it could have made the work go five times as fast, and could have demanded that it should be done by June 1st.

All through the month of May German troops have been streaming continuously up to Cherbourg. We have seen encamped in our field infantrymen, artillerymen, Aryan Germans, and also Georgians and Mongols with Asiatic faces commanded by officers and N.C.O.'s of the Reich.

In the latter part of May the artillery takes quarters in Gambosville. The officers come to see me at the Town Hall. They need spades, picks and saws immediately. The town is to be put in a state of siege, and the work has to be finished in five days. I reply that there are no more spades or saws in the neighborhood, and that they will have to canvass all the houses in order to find a few tools. They phone the Feld Kommandantur at Saint Lo to know what punitive measures to take. The Feld Kommandantur gives an evasive answer; so they finally go to a hardware store, where, after threatening to loot everything, they manage to obtain tools. Guns are then installed at all the town approaches; on the Garentan road, on the La Fièvre road, before Capdelaine, on the Ravenoville road.

Sinister-looking Mongols walk the town at nightfall.

Then, suddenly, three days after their installation, the guns are taken away, and I am asked to provide transport immediately to take the ammunition and food to Saint Comedus Mont. Some big generals have been around on inspection and have, so it appears, found all this display unnecessary.

Sainte Mère Eglise is once again alone with its anti-aircraft unit. All the Germans we question are perfectly certain that a landing will take place in Cotentin:

"You can take a good look at your houses," they say, "All that will be *kaput*."

All the infantry billeted in the area frequently go through the town during their maneuvers.

Our anti-aircraft gunners are the only ones who have a quiet time. The Major has sent several men to Mercurey, in Burgundy, to fetch him good wine. For them, life is sweet.

ON THE EVENING of Sunday, May 29th, as night falls, aircraft are rumbling in the sky. Squadron follows squadron.

Then, large planes with wing- and tail-lights on, pass above us. They are flying so low that we can make them out distinctly in the starry night.

We decide not to go to bed, and have our valises ready with our most precious belongings. Then, from a third-floor window which affords a splendid view of the horizon, we see a great glow over the area of Foucarville and Sainte Martin. Hundreds of flares are falling to earth. They disappear behind the line of trees, and it seems to us that a new dawn is breaking over the sea.

Soon more flares appear, and remain floating in the sky. Against the dull roar of the big engines we hear the whine, then the explosion of the sticks of bombs. The windows rattle; in Sainte Mère Eglise it is daylight, a garish bluish daylight without shadows or half-tints.

A woman comes out in her nightgown to close the shutters. The children are probably afraid, and it is better that they should neither see nor hear.

Later some planes come cruising over Ravenoville, level with the new houses, and a score of parachutes are dropped, which drift slowly from east to west over the Town Hall and fall somewhere near La Fièvre road. As they pass, anti-aircraft gunners in the church steeple pepper them with tracer bullets.

What did those parachutes bring?

Men? Flares which failed? Food? I have never learned. Some Germans I question the next morning tell me that it had been of no consequence. One of them shows me a piece of the white cloth which had gone to make the parachutes.

For a long time, when darkness has returned, we wait to see if anything is going to happen.

The silence is broken only by the humming of aircraft, now invisible.

It has been only an aerial bombing of the East coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula.

THE INSTINCT THAT, IN DANGER, pushes human beings to reassemble, had all my family gathered in the same room. The children had interrupted their games, and now, obedient, passive, they would cower close to us.

During the first week in June the bombings become more intense around Valognes and along the coast and the railway line. From the Town Hall office windows, nearly every day we see the Allied planes diving toward their targets, beyond the steeple of Picauville, then roaring up again to the serene, quiet sky. Columns of smoke would appear, to be carried away by the wind. The bombing of bridges would continue.

Constantly, at night, the window-panes and the shop windows would shake. We would learn in the morning that a farm had been destroyed and its inhabitants torn limb from limb. And yet, life goes on as before. The bombs appear to fall more or less at random, without any general plan.

"They were just clumsy and made a mistake," we say.

Throughout the night of June 4th-5th, squadrons of heavy bombers succeed one another over the Peninsula. There is a violent wind blowing, and we wonder which area they are going to attack. We go to bed late, a little anxious all the same. And on the morning of June 5th, with the dawn, calm has returned.

The anti-aircraft gunners as usual are in the square, busy about their trucks, and the fatigue groups have gone to plant their "candles."

At about six P.M. two small Allied fighters come down from an overcast sky. They cruise very low over the church spire, then circle the village. The Germans fire. They disappear into the clouds. At eight o'clock, in the sky from which the clouds have cleared, we see them again, describing wide circles around us. The night promises to be very beautiful.

It has not yet come completely, when the humming of the big planes begins again. The engines are so numerous that it is impossible to make out the directions of the squadrons. Shots are fired from the steeple, from the fields, from the trenches.

Over the coast, the sky is again flare-lit. We climb once more to the third floor and the same sight meets our eyes as the week before, but a little farther away toward Saint Marcouf: the same aurora glow, the same explosions shaking the house like a giant battering-ram.

We had just lain down on our beds when we heard a violent pounding on the front door. I got up. People

were coming to tell me a villa on the other side of the square at the entrance to La Haule Park was being gutted by fire. The fire brigade was vainly striving to gain control of the flames. We made a chain as far as the cattle-market pump. Men ran along with their canvas buckets and threw the contents into a large tub. Through the bushes, great shadows could be seen moving about. The wind blew the flames sidewise, and bits of burning paper and hay were spinning toward a loft twenty yards away filled with straw and wood.

In the air heavy bombers were passing in great waves from west to east. The machine-guns were cross-firing above our heads, and hundreds of big luminous flies whistled, yelled and whined, occasionally coming up with a smack against the walls of the burning house. The anti-aircraft men, in field dress, with their arms loaded, watched us. The distant explosions of heavy bombs shook the earth.

Suddenly the fire-alarm sounded, sad and lugubrious, a succession of short notes. At this precise moment a wave of big transport planes, with all lights on, came over at treetop height; another followed immediately, then still more. And something, like enormous confetti, came out of their bellies and dropped rapidly to earth.

PARATROOPERS

The pumping stopped and all eyes were turned upward. The flak crew opened fire.

All around us the airborne troops dropped heavily to the ground.

By the light of the fire we could clearly see the men, at the end of their cables, maneuvering their parachutes. One of them, less skillful perhaps, landed in the midst of the flames. Sparks flew up, and fire became fiercer.

Another suddenly wriggled like a worm. His hands shot up and gripped the cables; his legs contracted violently. The big parachute dropped in the meadow.

In an old tree all covered with ivy there hung a great white veil, and at the end of it we saw a man moving. . . . Clinging to the branches, slowly, like a reptile, he was making his way down. Then he tried to unfasten his belt. The flak gunners saw him. At a few yards' range, the machine-guns spat out their sinister rattle; the unfortunate man's hands fell, and the body swayed and hung limply at the end of the cables. . . .

Before us, a few hundred yards off, near the sawmill, a big transport plane crashed to earth, and soon a second fire was raging.

The alarm was still clanging. We were now full in the firing zone from the steeple, and bullets were smacking into the ground not far from us.

The night was warm and the moon sliced the scene into wide strips of light.

Meanwhile, at the pump, a paratrooper suddenly emerged from the shadows in the middle of a group of our people. He covered us with his Tommy-gun; but seeing that we were French, he did not fire. A German sentinel who was hiding behind a tree gave a great shout and fled at his best speed.

The paratrooper tried to ask a few questions, but as nobody in the group spoke English, he crossed the road and was lost in the night.

Above the fire, the great planes continuously glided over and dropped their human cargoes on the farther side of the cemetery.

Soon the anti-aircraft gunners, realizing the importance of what was happening, ordered us to go indoors immediately. On the square, a German soldier passed us.

"Tommy parachutists all *Kaput*," he told us, and was careful to show us the body of a man lying near his parachute.

I could not resist the temptation to go into the garden, from which the view extends over the countryside.

From the house there was only a courtyard to go through, then the sea road. I crept down the little lane running alongside a river which had been widened and deepened here to serve as a public wash-place.

Flattened against the bank which ran down from the garden and above the wash-place, I could gaze on the fairy-tale spectacle.

The moon, very near the horizon, shed a bright light on the expanse of water and left me in the shade. The machines were still passing overhead at the full speed of their engines. The sky was continuously crisscrossed with the fugitive lights of tracer bullets, and sometimes these lights would seem to disappear into the huge fuselages.

In the east, the big elms of the Manor fields stood out like shadow pictures against the red background of a fire. Without a stop the confetti continued to fall to earth. Enormous gliders attached to the aircraft by cables would suddenly detach themselves and describe large circles before alighting. The dull blows of the big bombs were still shaking the earth.

I tried to imagine the thoughts of these paratroopers crowded inside their planes, then jumping into the void; and for some reason my mind went back some thirty years to the moment when, on just such a light night as this, I left Bethelainville Wood with my regiment for the Verdun front.

These two periods were alike because, in spite of apparent differences, they were both beyond the scope of humanity.

The sentences of my old soldier's diary came back to me exactly as they had been written in those far-away days:

"One by one, the companies join the column on the wooded road leading up to Esnes. Our machine-gun company, with its conveyances, follows in the rear of the battalion. A violent artillery barrage has just begun. The flashes of the explosions split the night with myriad lights, and the noise is like the beating of a huge copper gong. We march silently; we feel small, shrunken, like larvae. The thoughts of each of us are solemn, and we hold our little lives to us, estimate their value and wonder what the chances are of keeping them. . . ."

"Tiny hopes, hopes that only look forward a few hours, help us along, and without confiding in our comrades about them for fear they should vanish, each of us clings to them like a shipwrecked man to a lifebelt."

It must have been that feeling of smallness before the fearful unknown and the immensity of the job to be done which beat in the hearts of these men who had come from so far and were now falling in the middle of the night into a foreign land.

As I WAS THINKING these thoughts, a C-47 appeared over the houses just east of my hiding place. To right and left the parachutes unfolded, and two of them came to rest in the garden. A moment or two later shadowy forms appeared on the enclosing wall. A third parachute, the last to leave the C-47, was gliding toward me. In a flash I saw the paratrooper wriggling at the end of his ropes a few yards above my head. With a resounding splash, the man sank into the river. The parachute caught in a little apple-tree hung across the path. Loaded as he was with emergency rations and munitions, and entangled in his cables, the poor fellow was going down without a cry, without a murmur. Thanks to the parachute, I had no difficulty in hauling him to the bank.

The soldier had no helmet; half fainting, he was coughing and spluttering, trying to get rid of the water which filled his eyes. Then he looked at me, and I read astonishment in his face.

"Tommy?" I asked him.

Probably not understanding, he answered: "Yes."

"Don't be afraid," I added in English.

At that, he looked at me again and—I don't know why—felt my hat, then my coat.

"I am French," I told him, laughing, "and a friend."

He must have thought he was a prisoner, and now as he began to grasp the situation, he quickly got rid of his bonds. Like a gentleman, he introduced himself:

"My name is —"

Despite all my efforts to remember, I cannot recall his name.

"May I help you?" I asked.

"Thanks, I must go," he replied in a calm voice which was in strange contrast to his former agitation.

And he pointed to a fresh wave of planes which had just come over the line of trees standing like powerful sentinels at the end of the meadow, indifferent to the majesty of the scene.

In the wake of these great night birds, other paratroopers, like the seeds of the maple-tree, were silently descending; and soon the great domes of bright-colored silk, silvery in the moonlight, rested on the meadow grasses.

HIS ORDERS MUST CERTAINLY have been to join his group and every wasted minute might be fatal to himself and to his companions. Dripping with water, without a rifle, he stepped over his parachute. I piloted him a few paces away to where some steps led up to the bank. He was reeling like a drunkard, and yet before disappearing, he turned around toward me:

"The parachute," he said, "—for you! Good-by."

I answered with a friendly wave. The shadow disappeared and then reappeared at the bottom of the garden, climbed the wall and faded away forever.

On my way home I was thinking as I crossed the deserted road lit by the last moonbeams, that tomorrow, under different conditions, the example and the great "poilus" of 1914 were going to be duplicated here.

In the morning, I returned to fetch the parachute, which was as precious to me as a sacred relic. During the following days, I very often questioned paratroopers to obtain the name of this second Moses saved from the waters, but no one could give me the slightest detail about him.

Gathered in a room, behind our windows, we heard at about two in the morning the noise of motor engines. The moon had gone down and we could no longer see anything. But, from the shouting going on in German, it was easy to guess the Flaks were taking to flight. Some motorcycles whizzed past. A few more, with all lights out, went off toward Carentan and silence reigned.

The steeple machine-gun alone still fired long bursts. I opened a window a slit; the aircraft were still coming over, but very high up. From time to time, we would hear furtive, short rattlings rather like the cry of the partridge calling its chicks.

At about three o'clock, we saw in the square at the foot of the trees, the glow of lighted matches, then the red points of cigarettes, then an electric torch lit up the body of the dead paratrooper. And by the light of that torch, it seemed to us that men were lying down at the foot of the trees. We argued about it for a long time: are these men Germans? Are they Tommies?

Germans, in the midst of such dramatic happenings, would not be lying under the trees but standing up or entrenched inside the houses.

Bit by bit, the night began to split up; the milky dawn showed a few outlines, the outlines became better defined and we were dumbfounded to see the square occupied not by Germans or Tommies but by Americans.

We recognized first of all their big rounded helmets which we had all seen reproduced in German magazines. Some were sleeping or smoking, lying under the trees. Others, rifle in hand, lined up behind the wall and the little communal building known as the public weighing place, were covering the hostile church.



No wound showed; one would have believed her asleep.

Their fierce and somewhat untended look reminded us of movie gangsters. The helmets were covered with a net of khaki cord; the faces of most of them were grimed with soot, like the heroes of detective stories. Their getup, to us who were accustomed to the German discipline and correctness, seemed absolutely careless: just plain brown boots to halfway up the calf, belts of machine-gun cartridges hung round their shoulders and waists. They were armed not only with tommy-guns but with enormous revolvers which stuck out over their hips. Their figures were entirely without line; the ample wind-jacket, all folds and of a vague color between gray, green and khaki, opened in front to form a vast pocket in which were heaped munitions and rations. They also had a pocket for field-dressing and trousers pockets. On the sides and behind, pockets up the legs. Further, strapped to the right calf, was the long sheath of a dagger.

That was how the soldiers of America appeared to us for the first time in the dawn of the 6th of June, 1944.

Since then, having had time to examine this costume which seemed to us so extraordinary, we have found it to be perfection itself. It allows the wearer, if not to have the brilliant distinction of a recruiting sergeant in the time of our Kings, at least to carry with him the maximum quantity of munitions and food, without interfering with his movements. It was designed for war, not for the drawing-room.

A parachutist looking exactly like the others came and knocked at my door. When I opened, he introduced himself: "Captain Chouvaloff" and he asked me my name.

"Would you kindly tell me," he said, "where the German commander of your town is?"

I offered to accompany him.

"O.K.," he replied.

"If the Tommies come," he cried furiously, "your first delay in executing my orders will mean that you are shot!"



He offered me some gum, and we left together. He did not speak. A young man of our town joined us. On his guard, the Captain made us walk before him and, having brought out his revolver, ordered the young man to break the door in. We found that the German Major had fled with his Flaks, or anti-aircraft gunners.

Two weeks later, I reminded Captain Chouvaloff of this episode; he had become a friend of mine and he apologized with the words: "We had been told so many stories of Frenchmen collaborating that we were a bit afraid of you."

And yet, during this night of the 5th and 6th, and later, the French did all they could to help the paratroopers: ladders would appear at the right spot along the roofs; garden gates would open to let them through.

When the Germans put questions, nobody had seen a thing. When the sooty-faced soldier asked, everybody knew and told him where the German was hiding.

Paratroopers wandering as far off as Saint Germain de Tournebut and Quineville were brought back to their unit by Frenchmen who guided them in the night over more than fifteen miles.

At Picauville, in the canton of Sainte Mère Eglise, where the paratroopers fought alone for five days, the peasants took in hand the feeding of a large number of them. At night they were brought indoors; and at the family table, hastily, they drank milk and ate our black bread before returning to their fighting posts.

On the other side of the flooded marshes, at Les Moitiers en Baupré, eighty paratroopers had landed. Completely isolated, they would inevitably have been killed or taken prisoner. The bridges, well guarded by the Germans, were impassable. The marshes were dangerous to cross in a boat in pitch darkness. Treetops broke the surface of the water; wide muddy patches emerged; and the preceding year, in those very parts, some farmers had been drowned while out hunting at night.

And yet, the peasants did not hesitate. They took the paratroopers aboard their little flat-bottomed boats, most of which had remained hidden for several years. Paddling far from the bridges, between the reeds, they brought the soldiers to the other side, near the village of Montessy. All night long the tiny barques plied from one bank to the other. The peasant boatmen could hear the Germans transmitting the orders when they changed guard.

This assistance was maintained in spite of the distrust of the first days, which prevented the paratroopers from

deriving the maximum benefit from the help we were so willing to give.

A few days after the landing, there were still Frenchmen ready to guide the American soldiers to the point of attack. The little boats once more crossed the black, mysterious waters peopled with "goblins" by the popular imagination, and above which still hover the tragic shades of Barbey d'Aureville and Guy de la Varenne. To an astonished and marveling colonel who asked him for his name and address, a young twenty-year-old Frenchman replied proudly: "That's not your business; I'm French; therefore your friend. And that must be enough." . . .

The sun was rising. Many of the inhabitants had come out onto their doorstep. All was quiet; not a bullet, not a shell. In the trees and on the roofs of the church, of the poorhouse, of the Town Hall, the great silken parachutes, relieved of their loads, floated gently. Others, on the ground, made great many-colored patches, and already the children were gazing enviously at them. Each person was telling his neighbor the night's adventures: the paratroopers had dropped everywhere, in the courtyards, in the gardens, on the rooftops.

Except in La Haule Park and in an inner courtyard where a Flak unit was installed on the first floor, casualties were slight over Sainte Mère Eglise. It really takes many bullets to kill a moving man at night-time.

I returned to La Haule Park. At the entrance lay a dead German infantryman. Near the pump, our fire-fighting apparatus remained more or less intact. The fire was finishing off the house, its corn loft and its stables.

In the trees of the park the bodies were hanging beneath their parachutes. Other men who had got rid of their bonds were lying on the ground, stayed in their flight by the Flak bullets. The poor fellow who had fallen into the furnace had rolled some distance from the house during his struggles, and his charred body was still smoking. One parachute had come down on top of a giant cedar, and the man had contrived to clamber to the bottom of the tree.

In a small field, which I visited next, two gliders had landed in a hedge. The great wings were splintered to bits, but the bodies of the gliders were intact, and the soldiers must have escaped injury. Through the window of one fuselage a fully equipped jeep was visible, and in the other a field-gun.

A few yards farther on, a soldier was lying on the side of a ditch with a broken leg. A peasant was bending over him, feeding him with milk from a large bowl.

IN THE STREET, maneuvers were beginning. Platoons with their rifles under their arms were walking in lines, keeping close to the walls and smoking cigarettes or chewing gum. Others belonging to the reserve sections slept in the square and in the Manor fields.

On the heights of Capdeleine a few bullets whistled past. A dozen German prisoners went by with their hands on their heads, on their way to Chef-du-Pont. It was about eleven when a German shell exploded in a garden; a few others whirled by and went on and lost themselves a little farther away toward Gambosville. . . . The battle was about to begin.

The opposing forces were made up as follows:

At Sainte Mère Eglise two battalions of paratroopers had landed. A third battalion appeared to have dropped between Sainte Mère Eglise, Neuville au Plain, and the village of La Fièvre. These three battalions were from the 505th Regiment of Parachute Infantry, belonging to the 82nd Airborne Division. They were commanded at Sainte Mère Eglise by Lieutenant Colonel Krause, by Lieutenant Colonel Vanderwoort and Captain Roysdon, who was killed.

The third battalion had landed in the square and on the lower part of the locality. The second had been dropped around Capdeleine and the quarter Le Haras.

Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division had jumped to the south at Fauville. Against these battalions the German forces seemed very numerous. At Fauville, two companies were massed, together with the anti-aircraft men who had escaped during the previous night from Sainte Mère Eglise. To the east, around Beuzeville au Plain and its castle were two companies of Georgians commanded by Germans.

To the north and northwest, troops had been pouring since midnight into Neuville au Plain from Fresville, Emondeville and even Montebourg, well-armed troops with tanks and guns.

Finally, to the east, in the direction of the village of La Fièvre, dispersed elements had assembled on the heights commanding the marshes.

By THREE P.M. many bullets were whistling over the trees; then the batteries of Fauville installed in the park of Chappay Castle on Highway 13 at the top of the slope, began to fire delayed-action shells. Their targets were the exits from Sainte Mère Eglise toward Carentan.

A veteran who had escaped the massacre of the last war fell. At the same instant a father, a former prisoner of war, was dying in his house. . . . Sainte Mère Eglise was to pay the price of liberation.

The steel splinters were smacking down on the roofs like big hailstones. An officer I met asked us not to move about, and to get into the shelters.

As it happened, there were no deep shelters in Sainte Mère Eglise because of the springs which were close to the surface. Some of the people who had gardens behind their houses had dug trenches in them. But many preferred that part of their house which they judged most solid, to a precarious shelter. For our part, we hurriedly went and took shelter in a ditch near a little fountain, called Fontaine Saint-Méen, scarcely a hundred yards from our house. It was not perfect, but it was better than staying under the trees in the square.

As we left, a house was beginning to burn in the rue de Carentan; a very young and beautiful girl had just been mortally wounded and was dying on her bed; a former prisoner of the last war who, regardless of danger, had wished to see how things were going, was at the gates of death, thinking not of himself, but of his wife's safety.

Shortly after our arrival in the ditch, which we had lined with parachutes because of the damp, more batteries entered into action. Judging by the direction of fire, we easily identified them. They were heavy guns camouflaged in pillboxes near the village of Azeville. These guns were set up on revolving gun-carriages, and could fire in every direction. They appeared at the time to be laying their still uncertain aim on the sea road, thirty yards away from us.

A young parachute sergeant named MacLeod came and spoke to us for a few minutes.

"The situation," he said, "is not so bad, but the American tanks ought already to have arrived from the coast. The officers told us the landing had not come off yet, because the sea was rough and for other reasons they didn't explain.

"Don't leave here," he added. "There are German groups everywhere, and we've just got some out of the trench in that big field."

He showed us a spot which my children and I had visited a couple of hours earlier to fetch the parachutes for our trench. He was still talking when a burst of shells forced him down. He gave us a friendly wave.

"O.K.," he said, "I'll be seeing you."

Shadows were beginning to invade our ditch, and big clouds were accumulating in the sky. We had just finished distributing condensed milk to the smallest of the children. The Americans had installed one of their guns right close to us, and the shells went over our heads.

Then a German battery of small field-guns returned their

fire. The shots were short and fell among a group of trees twenty yards ahead of us, toward the Clarons road. Our ditch was enflamed, and on that side we were not protected by any parapet.

The American gun, which was sending its projectiles an appreciable distance toward Turqueville, suddenly shortened its range and attacked the nearby German battery. In a couple of minutes it was silenced.

Two days later I ventured that way. One of the battered German guns had rolled into the ditch beside the Clarons road, near the first crossroads, and three corpses were lying near it.

It was just before nightfall that tragedy befell us. A shell burst right over us, and we were covered with earth, bits of wood and leaves. A woman's cry went up: "I'm wounded!"

The children began to complain too.

"My ear hurts," whimpered a tiny one.

A moment or two later we discovered that two yards from us a gay, elegant young woman, mother of three children, had ceased to live. No wound showed; her face remained serene; one would have believed her asleep.

When death took her, she had been, with her customary generosity, distributing the few supplies she had brought with her.

The night shrouded us in its darkness. Squadrons of planes passed overhead; shells screamed over us or splintered to bits in the trees around us. Toward Beuzeville and the village of Beauvais the machine-guns crackled. In the thick shadows I saw two armed Germans run by in front of our den. And in the little field, under the apple trees, we made out the mad race of hunted men running for their lives, and the galloping step of their pursuers intent on killing. And from time to time sobs were heard: the little children calling their mother.

Yet there was something in that lugubrious night to lighten the horror of our funeral watch: our church steeple was there, still intact, and it would tell us in its quiet voice that a quarter of an hour had just been granted to us, that a quarter of an hour of war had passed too.

"Courage," it said; "it is three o'clock . . . four . . . daylight is coming. . . . Five—the good sun is going to rise, caress the mother again and warm the little children who have gone to sleep at last."

And we, sometimes, thought another life was throbbing near us and sharing our sufferings.

While we breathlessly awaited death in our foxhole, other dramas were being enacted around Sainte Mère Eglise.

On the boundary of the commune, around the castle of Beuzeville au Plain, the two companies had been sharpshooting all night against the paratroopers as they came down into the fields, and had inflicted quite serious losses on them. At dawn, realizing that an offensive would be useless and that they were encircled, the Germans had taken up positions in the castle and its outbuildings.

THROUGHOUT TUESDAY, attacks and counter-attacks followed one another. The parachutists had commandeered a young man of sixteen from a neighboring farm, had given him a helmet, a complete G.I. uniform, cartridges and a Tommy-gun, and the young man guided them through hedges and showed them the way. When evening came, the Americans arrived at the gates and surrounded the outbuildings.

Victory was at hand.

And then it was that the Allied commander found out that the reserves of ammunition were exhausted. Firing was reduced to single shots; then the Tommy-guns were laid aside and only rifles were used. Finally, in ambush in the hedges and ditches and at the entrances, they waited for the Georgians, to kill them with knives.

A few exhausted paratroopers took refuge in a little peasant house. They asked the housewife to hide them.

"No more ammunition," they said. "The Germans are coming to kill us. It's all up with us."

Luckily, because of the darkness and the possibility of a trap, the two Georgian companies did not dare venture out into the open country.

And all of a sudden, at about ten P.M., the American soldiers heard the colossal roar of innumerable squadrons rushing help to the spot. As on the day before, they flew over Sainte Mère Eglise in long successive waves, and the big gliders detached themselves and came to rest on the battlefields. The darkness was complete, and a light, fine rain was falling. The frail birds alighted at random on the black earth, and many were wrecked. Eight hundred yards from the castle, along the avenue leading to La Loude farm, lined with centenarian trees, at least fifty hulks lay with lacerated bodies.

But this sacrifice was not in vain. The belt of Tommy-gun cartridges, the grenades and the metal equipment were intact. As soon as Wednesday dawned, the battle resumed furiously.

INSIDE THE CASTLE, in the big family kitchen, near the magnificent medieval chimney-piece, seated on a couch, the German captain commanding the Georgians was smoking. Near him, his medic was giving first aid to the wounded. From time to time a runner would come and report on the situation of his company and receive orders. The captain listened very calmly to the sounds of battle, to the impact of bullets on the walls, to the explosion of American grenades in the courtyard and in the bushes fringing the pond.

At about noon, a soldier with the flat face of the Asiatic reported to the chief and handed him a paper.

"Take a good look at this man," said the captain to the civilians who had taken refuge in a corner of the room, "for you will not see him again. He is the bravest of the brave."

And with a friendly tap on the shoulder, he sent him away. Standing now, with his German officer's cap on his head, calm, he seemed to be thinking.

A great flame went up, making the copper pots glow with a ruddy light. The outbuildings were on fire. Loud shouts were heard, then yells of pain, and the first sooty faces appeared in the courtyard.

The captain poured himself out a large glass of cider. "Your health," he said, and emptied it at a gulp. Then he walked toward the door, unarmed, with his little stick in his hand. He opened the door, and half turning:

"Farewell, gentlemen," he said simply.

He disappeared. . . . His body was never found.

The medical officer got up in turn, and without a word, unarmed and with no helmet, he too proudly went to meet his fate. Twenty yards from the door he fell with a bullet through his head. Such were the fanatical and determined men which the soldiers of America had to face in that spot. No wounded and no prisoners came out of Beuzeville au Plain.

At the other end of the commune also, the battle was raging. The Germaus, starting from Neuville au Plain, on the Tuesday morning, were repelling the parachutists bit by bit. They had resolutely taken the offensive at this extreme point of the American advance.

In the evening of that Tuesday, they came into the big fields a few hundred yards from La Rosière, which was fortunately empty of inhabitants, and which was on fire. As in the other sectors, munitions gave out until the gliders came.

On Wednesday morning the attackers were somewhere near Three Elms Road (Chemin des Trois Ormes). Five German tanks, in hiding at Neuville au Plain, were supporting the attack and firing unceasingly in the direction of Capelaine.

In the afternoon the Germans made their supreme effort. With the support of the five tanks advancing from

Neuville au Plain to Sainte Mère Eglise, they penetrated the valley called Valley of Misery (Vallée de Misère) as far as Le Haras. A hundred yards farther on was the crest, then the road coming down into the middle of the town.

The Americans realized the danger. With their wonderful courage, without a thought for the shortage of ammunition, they threw themselves into the battle. Sticking to the Germans, hidden in narrow, deep foxholes, they fired at point-blank range. Then, as soon as the enemy fell back, they sprang forward with daggers ready. Soon the Valley of Misery was littered with German corpses. We discovered them a few days later, fallen in long lines in the ditches, in the opening of fences, face to the town, stabbed by the enemy who had been waiting hidden behind the gateposts.

A word-of-mouth tradition explains the name "Valley of Misery." It seems that in olden days, in the unhappy time of the Hundred Years' War, Sainte Mère Eglise occupied this site. Loam houses roofed with thatch clung to these slopes in a long line extending as far as the old Abbey of Noires Terres. One dark winter day some English troops retreating to the sea, and composed, like many a paid troop of the time, of gross, cruel mercenaries, invaded the little township, tortured and massacred the inhabitants, hanged and burned, and finally, drunk with blood and slaughter, went to kill the monks in the Abbey.

The few unfortunates who had been able to flee returned later on, pale and ragged, and lived for a year or two near the bodies of their relatives; then all died of the plague.

Sainte Mère Eglise was afterward rebuilt on its present site, on the other side of the hill, around the Abbey of Courtomer. The chapel of the Thirteenth Century was improved and enlarged and became the parish church.

On June 6th, 1944, this Valley of Misery once again knew war, death and fire; but from now on it will be a Valley of Glory: for its hedges and pathway mark the definite halting of the German advance at the entrance to Sainte Mère Eglise.

To the west, around the village of La Fièvre, airborne troops had been reducing the German pockets on the heights all through Tuesday. At nightfall small individual trenches were dug all along the edge of the marshes, which were flooded, and were a thousand yards across.

In the night three German tanks advancing cautiously along the causeway built over the flooded area had attempted to storm the heights. Ammunition was scarce, and the paratroopers had had to stop the machines at point-blank range with hand grenades.

NEXT MORNING BY DAYLIGHT, at about eight o'clock, emergency squadrons had come over at very low level and parachuted food and ammunition. The Germans had met them with gunfire, and soon several farms were reduced to flaming ruins.

Very often up to their shoulders in water, covered with mud and tangled weeds, and under fierce fire from the machine-guns installed on the other side, the American soldiers wrested from the current the parachutes and their precious cargo, at Cauquigny.

The water spurted up under the projectiles; men died or were wounded and sank down forever into the black waters; but the work went on.

At eleven, the American machine-guns once again opened fire. The causeway and the marshes became no man's land.

A large heron, disturbed at what was going on, took heavily to its wings; ducks fled just above the surface, troubled by these terrible occupations of mankind.

Farther back, in all the meadows of Sainte Mère Eglise, thousands of cows, of that Cotentin breed which is the finest in France, were suffering their last agony beside the men. The huge bubbling entrails lay exposed, and

swarms of flies were descending. Other beasts, legs cut off by shells, were howling, while young colts, crazy with fear, bounded over hedges, only to receive the fatal bullet farther away.

In the evening, here too reinforcements arrived from the coast. The attack on the marshes was to begin the next day with the capture of the village of Cauquigny, laid waste by bombs.

A few days later the inhabitants came back to their village and found the German companies lying alongside the ruined walls and in the paths, sunk in their last sleep.

In our little sector, on Wednesday at about two P.M. the Azeville batteries intensified their fire. It was a regular barrage above us. From the north the battle was drawing nearer. The sound of the machine-guns, punctuated by the explosions of hand grenades, reminded us in an amplified tone of the crackling made by flames attacking resinous branches.

WE WERE SURE THE GERMANS were descending the slopes near the Pointe Collette and trying to occupy the sea road. If they succeeded, the American reinforcements could only come up from the coast by secondary roads. Two paratroopers on their way to battle threw themselves into our trench for a moment's rest.

"We've no more ammunition," they told us. "We didn't find much in the gliders. Our pals had been through them before us. If the tanks don't come up from the coast in a few hours, we're done."

"Oh, well," added one of them, smiling, "we still have our knives."

And with their traditional "O.K.," they disappeared northward along the hedges.

The end was at hand. No one admitted it to his neighbor, but already everybody was thinking of German revenge, of fire and blood in Sainte Mère Eglise, of the terrible pounding by the American aircraft defending their own people and utterly destroying by that defense what remained of the town and its inhabitants.

The big shells from Azeville unceasingly spat out their flame and their steel fragments. The children screamed, and the little ones of the dead woman still called to their mother, who had remained in a sitting position in the midst of us. Men would have stayed there in spite of everything, but with the women and babies, the situation was intolerable.

We decided to go and take refuge in a cellar at the entrance to the town; it was below ground, level on one side only, and offered little safety; but we might stand upright in it, farther away from the dead woman, with walls to serve as a screen between the shells and us. We planned to hide the children on the straw under a few blankets, and to await deliverance or the end of our lives.

I therefore left immediately in order to explore the way to the cellar.

There was a ditch to be negotiated with a baby-carriage, then a meadow, then a courtyard littered with the corpses of animals.

When the artillery fire abated a little, we left our hole and jogged along like hunted beasts searching for a new den. We found the new situation no better than in our ditch. As we arrived, a percussion shell exploded on the door leading into the cellar; débris of stone and cast iron were thrown inside, and thick smoke filled our refuge. Part of our group fled toward a dried-up watering-place two hundred yards from the spot.

Was it bad luck or destiny? One man was killed on the way, and another seriously wounded there.

Of a sudden, when we were expecting nothing but a tragic ending, above the sound of rifles and bullets a long, low rumbling came distinctly to our ears. With nerves agog, we listened, . . .

The rumbling became more distinct; metallic noises mingled with it—and all was transformed. Now the far



At sunset a great cry arose: "Here they come!"

off rumbling was interrupted; an unspeakable joy took hold of us, and a great cry burst forth: The tanks! The sea road is free! The coast is ours!

And in spite of the shells, without regard to the ever-present danger, we rushed out onto the road.

Opposite the new houses the first American tanks were appearing. They were small tanks, but to us they were fine, they were great. At their observation-posts on the turrets the gunners appeared before us, majestic as gods, powerful as giants. They were victory; they were to us deliverance.

At full speed they turned at the main crossroads and went up toward the most seriously threatened point, Capdelaïne. A few minutes later we heard their guns deciding the battle.

The paratroopers had won a great victory: the Sainte Mère Eglise Bridgehead, the first American bridgehead in France enclosed completely within the limits of the canton of Sainte Mère Eglise, was established. The linking up of Sainte Mère Eglise with the eastern coast of the Peninsula was assured.

Through this sole territory, in which most of the roads were narrow and winding, and comprising the beaches of Foucarville, Audouville, Saint Martin de Varreville, Sainte Marie du Mont, Saint Germain de Varreville, beaches of hard sand without rocks, suddenly transformed into ports rivaling the greatest in the world, the whole immense army, its convoys and its supplies, were to pour over France and Europe.

But in order to win this canton of Sainte Mère Eglise, the paratroopers had killed whole platoons of Germans, captured three hundred and sixty-four prisoners and lost more than half their men.

At the end of that day, I could not help going to look again at the church and at the Roman stone which, two thousands of years ago in the time of Caesar, marked the invasion route. This Roman stone still stood intact; another war had just passed over it without injury.

The church was also standing. Shells had pierced its old walls, and a buttress had disappeared. The imprint of bullets pitted its steeple with great leprosy marks, but the structure stood firm and could still defy the centuries to come. Its voice, calm and serene, oblivious of wounds, continued to measure the passing of time.

The Azeville batteries had been forever silenced by the tanks. On the square, among the shell-holes, was a tangled mass of branches, beams and débris of German trucks. Near La Haule Park, a very valuable mare and her foal lay horribly mutilated.

I met several men who had bravely taken on the duties of stretcher-bearers and supply men. They were coming from the rue de Carentan, and I learned from them that whole families had disappeared, buried beneath the ruins. One house was still burning, and with it two bod-

ies. In many other houses, as in the church, the shells had made big jagged gaping holes.

The men also told me that in the village of Fauville, from which the first shells had been fired at Sainte Mère Eglise, some houses had been destroyed. The German dead lay along the ditches in the area of Chappey Castle, among the débris of tanks. The castle itself was burning, having been set on fire by the Americans, who had believed it to be occupied by the enemy staff. The commander of the anti-aircraft unit and the commander of the infantry lay dead in ditches.

Enemy gangs were dug in east of Fauville, but seemed more anxious to save their lives than to fight. The poor-house had been spared, but all the outbuildings were but a mass of débris.

We soon had to separate. Shells came screaming over from the direction of Amfreville. Once again we had to give up sunshine and liberty and go down into the cellars.

NEXT MORNING Captain Chouvaloff, accompanied by another officer, came up to me.

"Would you come with me to the Gendarmerie?" he said.

I accepted. The gendarmes had taken refuge in a farm in the village of Beauvais. To get to this village, we had to go up the rue de Capdelaine and down again on the other side to turn into Three Elms Way. It was a difficult task, accomplished at the double, keeping close to the walls under the hail of time-shells which constantly swept the highway.

At the entrance to Three Elms Road and the Valley of Misery, the battle had just ended. In a little field near Le Haras lay several American tanks with their dead guns pointing their muzzles high into the sky. In the road, just at the entrance to the pathway, two German tanks had just been knocked out, and fire had destroyed their machinery. Arms and legs emerged from the turrets. Two unknown soldiers, black all over, were slowly burning away.

In the pathway enemy bullets were cracking. Along the ditches lay dead men, and trees obstructed the way.

Still we hastened forward; the Germans were only a few hundred yards from us. . . .

On Friday afternoon, we buried our dead. There was no official delegation: we were alone with them. All liberated France was but a part of the canton of Sainte Mère Eglise, and even this liberated France remained in the battle. Many men had come to dig common graves. Others went with a little hand-cart to fetch the unfortunate people who had remained under the ruins of their houses.

As there were no shrouds, we tore down from the trees the parachutes which still remained, and our dear ones went on to their last journey draped in great veils of finest silk.

The church had not been able to receive them. It had become the abode of refugees who no more had a home. The great Poor One whose love for the unhappy had been so great, had received them near His tabernacle. They slept not far from Him, rolled up in German blankets; and sometimes an old dame would come and kneel at the Communion table to thank Him for having extended His help to her. And yet Christ blessed our dead in the person of our priest, who recited the ritual prayers. I sloped the flag of France over them, and the poor bodies disappeared beneath the Norman soil which reclaimed them.

The very next day Captain J. K. Owen, and later on Major Yuill of Civil Affairs, asked me for all available men to dig more graves. More graves! Ah, yes, the coin of war is on the obverse glorious, on the reverse it has the cadaverous face of death, calling to it good and bad alike.

For days and weeks our men dug the rich soil where the great white cars with red crosses, closed like coffins,

came in long rows, bringing to their resting-place the sacred remains thrown up by the battle. . . .

The Expeditionary Forces are now attacking Montebourg, Amfreville, Pont l'Abbe and, in the south, Carantan.

Pont l'Abbe is in ruins, pounded and burned by the American Air Force. From the heights of Capdelaine one can see far off the glow of the fire which is consuming Montebourg.

The German batteries often shell our crossroads. We are rather like rats, coming out after each barrage and scurrying back to our holes when danger returns.

Day and night, without pause or rest, the convoys come up from the coast, taking men and materials to the nearby front line. Big tanks crawl for hours at a stretch up the Ravenoville Road, tearing up the surface. Occasionally shells burst on the trucks driven by Negroes. The vehicles which are hit are pushed into the hedges by the following ones; and the convoy, without stopping for a moment, forms again farther on.

An American army truck comes every morning to give us the BBC newscast. But we have already known for a long time everything concerning our sector.

"They are two days late," we say, laughing, to the speakers Mr. Berenson and Dorsay.

Several times a day staff officers or supply officers come down from the nearby lines and announce: "We have just taken such and such a road junction, field or farm." And without a map we know at once where the front line is. The refugees who come in, pulling baby carriages, carrying a small valise, or with nothing but their wretchedness, confirm the facts.

One has no more family; another has left his farm while the flames were still consuming the remains of his wife and children; some have come safely out of that hell; and to the others they appear privileged and lucky.

One evening the patients of the Asylum of the Bon Sauveur (Good Savior) like a flock of poor hunted beasts, guided by the nuns, arrived by the Chef du Pont Road. They assembled around the Roman milestone. Among them were monomaniacs, hysterics and other crazy creatures, laughing, grimacing, convulsing their poor faces. The nuns took them into the church, and in order to calm them told their beads aloud and over again. Those afflicted in mind had sought refuge in God's little earthly Kingdom.

Meanwhile, out of trucks loaded with shock-troops on the way up to the line, rained biscuits, chocolates, cigarettes and sweets on the heads of the children.

IT WAS ON A BEAUTIFUL DAY in the middle of June that I at last got Captain Tanner, of Civil Affairs, Canadian Army, to take me with him in his jeep to visit the big new disembarkation ports. It was a great favor, for civilians were strictly forbidden access to the beaches. But I was already beginning to feel that the expression "*strictly forbidden*" has not quite the same meaning in America as "*verboten*" in Germany. So we left by way of Sainte Marie du Mont, over little roads hemmed in between hedges and which the Pioneer Corps were striving to widen as far as the shoulders. Soon, at a bend in the road, we came to the flat dunes bordering the sea. . . .

As far as the eye could reach, and over more than fifteen hundred yards inland, hundreds of balloons looking exactly like monstrous fishes seemed to be swimming above us. Some only a few feet above the dunes, others higher up, and the highest were swaying nonchalantly up to a thousand feet in the air. A few lay upon the ground, half deflated, like dead and decaying fish. The cables which held captive all this antediluvian fauna reminded us of a giant seaweed.

Our jeep, a tiny little spider lost among these monsters, ran along thick wire mesh-tracks. All the time, looking like cockroaches on the scale of the scenery, the

amphibious "ducks," thirty-three feet long, and fitted with tires and a propeller, would climb in the dunes and dump their loads, then, at thirty miles an hour, disappear again behind the mounds of sand.

Here and there mountains of packing cases were accumulated, and trucks came and took them away toward the roads.

In the hollows of the dunes débris of all kinds had been gathered: ruined ducks, trucks, boats, old iron, as if they had been thrown there from a great shipwreck during a typhoon.

Not a tree remained after the great June bombings; nothing but sand and blocks of cement torn from the German pillboxes, and from which there emerged the long rusty iron reinforcement bars.

FOR A LONG TIME we felt like tiny insects gliding along the bottom of an immense ocean littered with wrecks and peopled with a giant flora and a prehistoric fauna.

The jeep suddenly changed its course and turned between two small dunes. The grating of the wheels on wire mesh stopped, and the sand became hard: We were on the beach.

From Foucarville to the Baie Des Veys, thousands of craft were beached or still afloat: small barges, long-boats, tankers, big massive cargo boats. They were all flat-bottomed and sat very upright on the sand. The fore-end of the cargo boats had been opened after the manner of wardrobe doors, and through these openings the ships were pouring forth their jeeps, trucks, tanks and guns.

Everywhere, down to the edge of the outgoing tide, cars were circulating between the big carcasses which, when the tide rolled in again, would close their jaws and return at full speed to England.

Ceaselessly the ducks came down from the dunes to the sea and entered the water; their propellers beating the waves and looking now like crocodiles, they came alongside the big ships which had remained afloat. Without moving, they received all the small freight: men, food, supplies, clothing and ammunition.

Thus, without wasting a minute, the cargo boat could wait till the last wave had beat against her stem, to open her doors in turn and empty her hold.

To disembark the heaviest stuff or the enormous packing cases, barges had been sunk, then joined together by a metal bridge, and the trucks and their trailers came and lined up along these novel quays.

Above each ship a monstrous fish, moored by its cables, mounted guard. In the distance, from the Saint Marcouf Islands to Grandcamp, powerful black outlines loomed on the horizon. They were the warships which kept watch over the vast flotilla.

Before returning to Sainte Mère Eglise, the Captain stopped on the coast, near the former village of La Madeleine, in the commune of Sainte Marie du Mont. A few years previously this little Norman hamlet had been living happy, carefree days. It was composed of several well-to-do estates, half farms and half villas. A few hundred yards or so in the rear an old chapel, ringed about with a cemetery in which nobody had been buried for many a year, gracefully upheld a little open-work belfry in which, as in a cage, there slept a bell. The chapel was surrounded by tall trees, yews, elms and oaks, which concealed it almost completely from the gaze of passers-by.

It was a quiet old sanctuary, which seemed to have withdrawn to that secluded spot, like a sweet old woman behind her window-panes.

There was now nothing left of the whole village, not even ruins. The ground was scarred and torn. The few remaining stones which had not been pulverized by shells and bombs had been used, first by the Germans, then by the American troops to lay down beds to the roads. The chapel remained standing, but it was badly scathed and its belfry was tottering.



In front of the site of the village, on the dunes (which were fairly high here) a German pillbox had been built. It had suffered little from the naval shells. The menacing mouths of the guns were still to be seen emerging from a narrow loophole facing the sea. Inside, the pillbox, a great mass of reinforced concrete, was divided into several compartments separated by shell-proof doors. An iron ladder, cemented into the wall, allowed a lookout to climb from the inside to the roof, and so scan the horizon with the minimum danger.

In the lower rooms German coats were now rotting in mire, stinking water, along with biscuits, canned foods, field-dressings, equipment, grenades and bits of armament. A few days previously a savage fight had occurred in this rabbit-hole.

And as it turned out, it was at this precise point of the coast that the first landing had been made, to be followed a few minutes later by a second, a little farther south opposite the village of Pouppeville.

JUNE 28TH: The Germans are still grimly resisting, and yet the front is receding. We can still hear the gunfire, but far off, at Periers and La Haye du Puits.

Especially at night, when the wind is from that quarter, we distinctly hear the crash of the terrible artillery preparation and air bombardment which precede the attacks. Searchlights rake the sky, and the fighters circle continuously with a deafening noise less than three hundred feet above our heads.

A huge airfield has been installed a mile from Sainte Mère Eglise, around the farm of La Londe. Cranes mounted on trucks, gigantic bulldozers and huge rollers have been brought up in a few hours, and in less than a week over an area three miles long and eight hundred yards wide, the trees have been torn up like light straws and transported far away.

The great avenue whose centenary trees were born under the First Empire, and along which the gliders had crashed on June 6th, had disappeared. No more hedge or ditches; the ground was leveled and furrowed in every



"Without thinking, I emptied my Tommy-gun at him."

direction with long runways; and these runways, like the coast roads, were covered with wire-mesh tracks.

No hangars were there, nothing but the farm buildings planted like big warts in the middle of the bare land; and on the outskirts of the immense field, mud-colored tents pointed fingers to the sky. The planes, shining like silver, lay basking in the sun.

Under the effort of thousands of wheels crunching the roads, a huge cloud of dust arose. The whole landscape was slowly turning gray. Dust reigned supreme, and from now on was part of our atmosphere. It settled everywhere, making the hedges velvety, filling the lungs, dulling the rolling green pastures, coating the furniture.

Sometimes the countryside would disappear behind a veil, and it would seem as though a fire were brooding under the earth and flames might soon shoot out from this opaque smoke. And as if from a giant factory, a cacophony burst forth—noises of enormous engines, of brakes, of clanking chains.

At every road junction a military policeman, with wide, ordered gestures, stopped, directed and passed the convoys through. The formidable American war matériel landed on the coast of Sainte Mère Eglise cantoned were thus hurried toward the front.

Danger was drawing farther away from us. Now that the mothers no longer heard the whistling of the shells gliding through the air, the children were released, and a fairy-tale life began for them. First they visited the gliders, hundreds of which littered the crofts around Sainte Mère Eglise. A few were intact, proud-looking, resting

on their fat tires, awaiting only the help of their big brother the airplane to soar once more into the sky. Others were only wounded with wings low but body sound. Finally, others, the most numerous, lay broken athwart the hedges and sunken lanes.

Occasionally one might perceive in a tree a dark blue wing bearing the white star, and vibrating in the breeze like the wing of a giant dragon-fly. And yet all of them were corpses. One could not risk the life of a plane to take back to England these poor unknown heroes, valueless and soulless, whose body was but made up of plywood and canvas. They were condemned to be burned when the men had time to do so, and when the children had had their fun out of the carcasses.

Every day little boys climbed up into the cockpits. They took hold of the steering gear, while others tried to push the monsters onto the slopes; little heads, fair and dark, emerged above the cockpits and fuselages. The bigger boys cut, sawed and scraped. In the evening they would come home loaded with their booty: sheets of plastic to replace our broken panes; cigarettes left by the pilots; biscuits, softened by dew and half-moldy; bits of the plaited silk cables which had linked the gliders to the aircraft; and miscellaneous small pieces of metal which were destined later to be thrown away by parents, but which to the little ones seemed like precious gems.

While the children were dissecting the gliders and emptying them of anything they considered precious, camps had sprung up all over the canton. In all the fields, tents would go up side by side in a few hours, like big mushrooms in the fall.

Fences were taken down to let the trucks through the fields, and in a short while the hay was shaved as if a plague of locusts had passed, and wide tracks ran beneath the apple trees. Lying, the cows left these unfamiliar sights and wandered along the pathways, chased and crazed by the howling paking of engines.

One day a boy more daring than the rest penetrated into one of these camps; another followed him. The soldiers hailed them; they were given candy and taught how to pronounce "Okay," "Hello, Joe," "Thanks a lot" and other expressions not to be found in the dictionary, and which caused much laughter.

In the evening the kids came home wonder-struck, and the next day brought their young friends, and the happy proceedings began over again.

Soon every camp had its children, spoiled by the soldiers, the nurses and the becaped WACs. They went into the field-kitchens and drank coffee and devoured slices of pineapple. Bit by bit they became an ornament to the camp and a subject of gaiety for the soldiers, rather like the pigeons which haunt the towers of Notre Dame and have become sacred guests to the Parisians.

DURING THE MOVIE SHOWS which were given every afternoon, when the popular singer sang his verse:

*"I opened the trunk;
I opened the bag,
I opened the box,
.....
And what I saw?
The picture of my—mother-in-law!"*

One heard, above the good homely laughter of the men, the piercing shrieks of glee of the young ones, who certainly did not understand, but laughed as loud as their little throats would let them on hearing the loud mirth of their big friends.

Their pleasures were so diverse that a ten-year-old, coming home at nightfall, might reply to his mother who, crazy with anxiety, had made his big brother look for him all evening:

"I've been so happy today that I can take a spanking easy tonight."

An orphan from the Public Assistance Bureau was treated at the flying camp as a regular little mascot. He emerged from his village at daybreak and returned only in the evening. The cooks conferred upon him the responsibility of opening the canned foods. He hovered like a sparrow among the gasoline cans and the stores, and one might see his sunny little face even in the Colonel's big reception tent.

Occasionally he would invite little friends in, and together they would go and watch the big bombs being put into place under the wings of the planes, and the repair work being carried out on the engines. To please them, the soldiers used to hoist them into the great flying machines and give them a wrench, and they would begin tightening up the nuts.

In the month of July the Colonel Young wing invited fifty Sainte Mère Eglise children to lunch. They arrived in their Sunday best, the little girls with big bows in their hair, some of them in pretty silk dresses cut from parachutes. All day long they were spoiled and treated as honored guests. Each soldier had adopted a child of France, who for a few hours was his child. With the help of his little conversation handbook, he would try to speak to him in his own language; he would give him presents and chocolate. When the truck left after the party, a spontaneous shout arose: "*Vive l'Amérique!*"

And that cry was far from meaningless. The little ones' hearts had been won.

ONE DAY WE LEARNED that our airmen were to leave. We went to see them.

"We're moving," they told us sadly.

Hidden behind a tent, curled up like an abandoned cat, the little mascot cried, and some of the soldiers, seeing him, furtively wiped away a tear.

Very often, since that day, we have heard that simple little phrase, "We're moving," and always, to the children and to a certain extent to us, it had the melancholy ring of a farewell.

The first days of August were important for Sainte Mère Eglise. Suddenly rumors spread, then were confirmed, of the arrival of the Leclerc Division, the famous French unit which, starting from Lake Tchad, had fought its way through the deserts of Libya, penetrated into Tunisia in the German rear, and kept the prestige of the country at a very high level.

The veterans of 1914, especially, who unarmed and at four-to-one odds had halted, then thrown back the enemy, were beside themselves with joy.

"The old army is not dead!" they thought.

Leclerc's advance units had already landed upon our beaches between Foucarville and Saint Martin. A large part of the population had gathered along the sea road.

At sunset a great cry arose:

"Here they come!"

The tanks were rounding the bend by the new houses. We first saw them in the same spot and with the same enthusiasm as we had seen the American tanks two months earlier. They too meant victory to us.

The crowd threw flowers and clapped. When the columns called a halt, children would climb up to the turrets, and the car drivers could not free themselves.

The Americans looked on smilingly. United States journalists, between snapshots, joined in our cheering. They understood that, for the first time since 1940 on the soil of the mother-country, exiled France, under sentence of death but glorious, resisting and strong, was meeting once more the other France which had suffered under the yoke.

For a long time the tanks filed past. They bore the tricolor, the Lorraine Cross, and below their turrets, the names of our towns and provinces: Tarentaise, Anjou, Sauternes, Bergerac, Gasconne, Chanterey, Beaujolais, Cote d'Or, Champagne, Normandie.

The tarred road surface cracked beneath them, and a great cloud of dust enveloped them.

Next day two N.C.O.'s, one from Toulouse and one from Brest, whose trucks had broken down, came to visit us. They remained a long time, in company of American officers, enjoying for the first time in four years the good old wines of France.

They kept repeating to us their confidence and their faith in the future of the country. But what they were most proud of was that all the modern equipment they had at their disposal had been bought and paid for cash down. "They wanted to let us have it on credit," they said, "but General de Gaulle and Leclerc wished it to be our own."

The American officers looked extremely surprised, and despite my explanations they could not understand.

"In France," I explained to the officers of America, "two of our greatest virtues are economy and the love of our home. The average Frenchman, when he has earned a thousand francs divides that sum into two parts, one to be spent and the other to be kept with jealous care till it may serve eventually to buy a field with a cottage, a villa or a castle which will really be his own, free from mortgage, and in which he will be able to spend in peace the autumn and the winter of his life."

"The Frenchman hates communal housing, even in luxurious conditions; what he wants is a house, rich or poor, but his own, belonging to him alone, a home which he will bequeath to his children with a last hope that they will keep it intact and better the paternal inheritance."

"The Frenchman, even when he professes to be an internationalist, also loves his country like a big home, with a jealous love. It is very rare that he should resolve to leave it; and when he travels around the world, he comes back, if possible, to die in the country of his birth."

"And in the same way," I further explained, "the Frenchman who has acquired colonies, that is to say fields, at the cost of his blood, his sweat and his money, and who has done his best to govern such territories lovingly, like the fields of his forefathers, will never agree, even if poverty strikes him, to sell these possessions which are part of his ancestral heritage."

We spoke our hearts, as friends. The American officers replied, "Yes," but I could feel perfectly well that they were not convinced.

"I had three cars," one of them told me. "I used to pay for them by monthly installments."

Another confided in me: "When I leave a town for another, I always leave my furniture with the house; and in the place I go to, I buy another furnished house. In that way, there is no moving to be done."

And I thought of our old pieces of family furniture, of our knickknacks, all of which with us have their story....

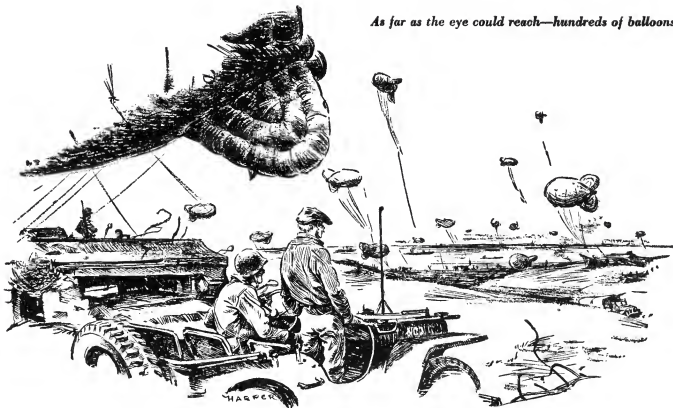
We separated after a last toast.

Because of two little N.C.O.'s of Leclerc's Army, we had exchanged ideas freely, as men born in countries of different customs, yet joined together in mutual friendship and in the same overwhelming love of Liberty.

PARATROOPERS

IT WAS DURING THE EVENING at the beginning of autumn when I saw them again: two great soldiers! It had been raining all day; and the trees, bare of their leaves, bent down their branches, which intertwined sometimes and cracked with long sighs. All over, the bursted rain-gutters let the drops of rain fall from the roofs and spatter onto the pavements. Some rare passers-by hastened toward their houses close by. From the Military Police tent erected under the trees a thick black smoke came out of a long pipe. Most of these M.P.'s were old combatants of D-Day, wounded and not well recovered, and they had been located in this resting post by the

As far as the eye could reach—hundreds of balloons.



Commandant. For a few months they had been living among the people, and we knew them very well. Sometimes they would come back from duty on the crossroads, holding a little child by the hand. They talked with him like big brothers; they took the child into the tent, from which he would emerge soon with supplies of chocolate and candy.

I came out to lock the house when they both walked down the steps of the square, with their calm pace, and they drew near. Immediately I noticed the glorious insignia on their field caps: a widespread parachute coming out of an airplane.

The paratroopers! I felt about the same emotion when I saw them as on June 6th; chiefly when I knew they were of 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Division, that same outfit whose name was bound to the name of Sainte Mère Eglise. One of our two men was dark-skinned, tall and stout; the other was muscular also, but fair-haired and somewhat bashful. Both had parachuted into our locality on the famous night. I invited them in.

These two great eagles had retraced their paths instinctively to this small place, lost in the great world, where they had first alighted before rushing upon the enemy throughout Europe.

AS SOON AS THEY ENTERED, there was great rejoicing. Both, wounded in Holland, had come here to Sainte Mère Eglise to see the country of their first feats, to pray also at their comrades' graves, those who remain among us for their supreme rest. Before leaving, they called upon me because they had seen me and talked with me during the battle.

They stayed with us a long time and the whole house prepared to welcome them, to help them with a good Normandy dinner, composed of many dishes that are served slowly and eaten slowly during several hours. So had eaten our ancestors, for whom life was not a series of pictures half-seen, but parcels of fate, the good hours of which ought to be tasted at ease.

Some logs taken from "Rommel's candles" and trees uprooted by shelling, brightly sparkled in the fireplace. The room where we gathered, the only one livable since

D-Day, and the sole one which had any window-panes left, was warm and comfortable. Lacking electricity, we had two lamps lighting the table, one of them without a chimney, and at times the fumes of the hot soup blended with the black smoke of the coal-oil.

After dinner, as usual every night, we turned down the lamps, to save oil. The table was drawn back, and we circled around the fire. I taught these two men, who knew how to kill with Tommy-guns, with knives, with grenades, how to use a pair of bellows. They had not seen such an instrument up to now, and like two children they amused themselves fanning the flames.

I asked them to tell me their story. "Okay," said one of them. "We enjoy being here so much." And he began as follows:

"My regiment is the 505th Parachute Infantry of the 82nd Airborne Division, as you know. During the World War One, the Division had distinguished itself in France, somewhere in the Argonne; and as a matter of fact it was regarded as a superior unit all over America. That is also why it was equipped as an assault paratroop Division back in 1942. Its men were taken from the forty-eight States and composed only of volunteers, strong boys, audacious and without fear, supple and skillful, who were sent for training straightway to Fort Benning, in Georgia. Here they were taught their work: how to fold their parachutes skillfully and to open them. They were taught that the green camouflaged ones were for the personal use of the men, the white ones for reserve or else for the bazookas, the yellow-gold ones to carry the mortars, the red for ammunition, the blue for machine-guns, the plain green for radio and communications.

"Then they became acrobats, creeping down from the treetops or jumping in the air before being stopped brutally a few feet from the earth. They were taught how to row boats, to swim.

"When their bodies had been sufficiently trained, one day they would go to Baroud, beyond the seas. Their first feats had taken place in Africa; then around Jela, in Sicily, in July, 1943.

"It was something like rehearsals, and we had almost no casualties.

"A landing on the Sicily beach with airborne troops cost the combat troops and us seventeen men."

They laughed, and their ironical laugh would mean: "It was not worth while bothering us for such an insignificant job."

They spent the next winter in England, where they arrived in December, 1943—in Lancashire County. I do not know this county, but they assured me that it was very similar to our Normandy, with hedgerows, meadows and small villages. The completed and re-organized regiment had to carry out an intensive training period for six months. The men maneuvered day and night. They learned how to dig their foxholes in the shortest time, to find their company again, to jump over the streams, to cut the hedges, to ambush in the best places, to put their pieces into firing position, to become familiar with German weapons.

They were brought very far from their camps sometimes, and they had to come back by night and by day in companies, in sections, in small groups or alone, directing themselves with a compass.

During the six months they parachuted twice by night at the entry of an English little town very similar to Sainte Mère Eglise. The locality was inhabited; they captured it, and the first time, the civilians, who most likely had not been warned, seemed to be scared of what happened

In the spring they were told of the approaching invasion. In the evening, under the tents, endless talk went on. Everyone tried to guess which point would be invaded first in the great assault of Europe.

One morning they were given colored maps with no names on; on this map they saw some marshes, small woods, streams and winding roads, but anything that could give any idea of the actual location was covered with black paint. A few days later these maps were taken away and replaced with others. The country seemed to be very similar to the former one: the same marshes, the same winding paths. However, it seemed the invasion plan had been somewhat changed. . . .

They were informed that it was because a German general commanding the area had changed his residence—the Airborne Troops' principal aim being to destroy his headquarters, it had been necessary to change the parachutists' scene of action so as to include this new German Headquarters.

In their tents and on the small camp-beds, bets were made. Many of the men believed that the attack would be in Holland, which is a marshy country; others would think of Denmark, others of Normandy.

"As for me," said one of the parachutists, "I had bet for Denmark. What we wished above all was the flight as soon as possible. We were ready, and we found those months spent in the camps very long indeed."

I objected that we also found the preparations so long. I described to him big Zitt and his ruffians and the threats made upon us.

THE FIRST LEAVES showed on the branches of the trees; no longer was there necessity for adding more coal to the stoves of the tents. Spring had come, and here as at Sainte Mère Eglise, on the other side of the Channel, they wondered: "when will the invasion take place?"

They were given a lecture by the Commander one evening: "Get ready—work, work," he would say. "The date of invasion is not far. It's coming, you may be sure, but when and where I don't know it more than you do."

The bets went on: Denmark was now the great favorite. On May 26 or perhaps 27, suddenly the travel order arrived. They embarked in trucks for an unknown destination.

The same day the Mongolian artillery removed their guns from Sainte Mère Eglise, after the German general's orders, and they took them to Saint Come du Mont.

"Before night," the paratroopers said, "we arrived at an airport close to the coast, in the countryside of Bournemouth. The civilians had been evacuated in the rear-country, and the entire camp was protected with barbed-wire. Sentinels guarded night and day, and it was strictly forbidden to enter the zone or even speak to the airmen. There was great excitement: invasion was about to begin!"

"However, we did not know anything as yet. Denmark had lost its popularity, and the turn had come to Normandy, the shores of which were beaten by the waves right in front of us. We did not maneuver any more. The officers organized meetings for us twice and three times a day.

ON THE 4TH OF JUNE, rumors became more precise; well informed soldiers would assure the men that the officers already knew, and discreetly, like fellows keeping a great secret, they would feign mysterious airs and would only point at the Cotentin Peninsula without saying anything. . . .

"Then we were told that the attack was delayed: the wind blew and the sea was rough. It was a great disappointment, but the following day the officers revealed the plans:

"The photo showed the town of Sainte Mère Eglise! We were distributed the non-censored maps; each man had four, that he was to study and keep precious in his pocket. One small size aerial-photography map was given also to each company commander.

"That day seemed very long to us," said our soldiers. "We were encouraged to sleep as much as possible, to eat well and our pockets were filled with K-rations. Ammunition was distributed. Everyone had to check his Tommy-gun, his pistol. We were given last minute advice.

"At about eight o'clock we were given some corks: we had to burn some of these corks with our cigarette lighters, to blacken our faces and hands for the purpose of not being seen by night as we jumped. In spite of the emotion that began to creep upon us, we could not help mocking each other.

"A few moments later Lieutenant Colonel Krause had us assemble on the grounds. We liked him very much and were confident in him, as well as in his executive officer, Lt. Col. Vandervoort.

"In a few moments," he said to us, "you will take off for the assault. I depend on you as you must depend on me. Tomorrow morning, at dawn, if you work well, the French flag will float on Sainte Mère Eglise's town hall!"

I could not help asking the two parachutists why they did not speak of the American flag.

They answered: "The Colonel insisted upon this fact that we were about to alight on friendly Allied territory. It was the French flag that must float on France, and not ours. In Italy, on the contrary, they said, we always put up our Stars and Stripes on the top of the buildings as soon as we had captured a town."

The logs on the fireplace were burning out, and we guessed the night must be cold. We could still hear the drops of water falling to earth with a thud. I threw a big log onto the hearth, and we drew lots to know which of our two guests should hold the bellows and fan the flames.

Then they took up the story of their adventures again. "At twenty-one hours, a little before midnight, the regiment assembled on the runways. It was an impressive sight: the big C-47 transport planes were waiting in long lines. Here and there an engine was being given a last trial run. We were divided up near each aircraft into groups of eighteen men, each of which included an officer and a N.C.O., or sometimes two officers. In front, one of the C-47's stood out. This was the leading plane, in which the Colonel was to take his seat, and which was to direct the operations. On top of this plane a large

dome, a kind of beacon was already lit. Our pilot told us he was never to lose sight of it."

Meanwhile, I reflected that the display of force these soldiers found impressive involved only one regiment. To transport this regiment composed of three battalions, of four companies with one hundred thirty-five men per Company, it needed over a hundred big C-47's.

At that same moment, on other airfields in southern England, hundreds of other aircraft were waiting on the strips for other groups of the 82nd Division. In some places they were already hitching the gliders to their silk towing-ropes. Finally, some of the planes had already flown over us on their way to drop their bombs on the pillboxes along the coast.

In the harbors, steam pressure maintained, and ready to sail, the ships were waiting. The landing army with its tanks, its artillery, its infantry rangers and assault troops, on board for three days, was sworn to secrecy and isolated on the steel hulls between sky and sea. . . .

At Sainte Mère Eglise, unaware of these tremendous preparations, we went pulling along our hand-pump trying to extinguish the fire set by tracer bullets in La Haute Park.

At 22:45, on the airfield, whistles blew repeatedly. The groups climbed into the fuselages on one side only. On that side the door had been taken out to allow the men to bail out in case of fire and also to avoid any delay on arrival. The engines were started, and with a shattering roar, the planes took off in long waves.

In the night, the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment was leaving for battle. . . .

"Over the Channel," went on one of our friends, "we sustained no losses. Below us the battle fleet kept watch, and in the sky, whenever our aircraft pitched a little, we could see the black shapes of the small fighters which protected us.

"Nobody spoke. Each of us was communing with himself, reliving the past, and thinking of the loved ones he had left back there in the States, on the other side of the Ocean.

"Through the open doorway we could see the moonbeams playing on the wave crests. Then, suddenly, a red light went on inside the plane. We were arriving—over the coast of France, west of the Peninsula!

"And by those red lights which all the pilots had switched on when they received the order from the leading plane, our Colonel told us:

"Get ready to jump!"

"Inside the fuselage, we got up. Mechanically, each man adjusted his equipment and our hands strayed to the red handle of the emergency parachute.

"In the light of the red bulb, the black-grimed faces wore queer, devilish expressions. The red light disappeared and was replaced by a green one. It was the order: 'Jump immediately.'"

"The officer jumped first, then the men, one by one! The N.C.O. had orders to leave last.

"I REMEMBER," went on our soldier, "that some of my comrades quickly made the sign of the Cross before jumping." And he added: "Now, I was swaying beneath my parachute. Total silence reigned. My ears were buzzing, my tongue parched and my throat dry. Two or three times, I saw the parachutes of my buddies quite close to me. I was nearing the ground. I could clearly see the hedges standing out blackly, and the ponds silver in the moonlight. I was terrified to see the constant flashes of shots and the tracer bullets coming up at us in long red streaks. One of them went through my parachute, and I heard the tearing of the material. I made myself as small as I could, and the seconds went by like hours. At the end I seemed to be in an express train; hedges and trees flashed by me faster and faster. I distinctly heard the patter of a machine-gun.

"Carrying out the instructions given us, I pulled at my cables to slow down. Then I bent my back, ducked my head and hit the ground with great impact. Without resisting, I allowed my body to roll over.

"When I stood up, I found myself in a meadow. I worked my cricket, a little pocket gadget which each of us carried. Each company had a different rallying signal: for my company, it was arranged that we should call twice.

"Other crickets answered me: '*Crick-crick-crick-crick*'"

"I unfasted my belt; from the nearby hedge shadow forms were calling me. I recognized my buddy who is here tonight, and other soldiers from my group. . . . We had landed exactly in the scheduled spot in a meadow bordering on the south side of the road fork at the western entrance to Sainte Mère Eglise."

I put a question.

"I remember having been told and having read in magazines that parachutists are able to fire their Tommy-guns as they descend?"

THEY BOTH LAUGHED heartily at that. "The people who wrote things like that," they said, "certainly never made a night parachute jump over unknown country. The lateral swing is sometimes several yards across; and during that time, when the body is facing now the sky and now the earth, following the successive inclinations of the parachute, you can hardly see anything. As long as the drop lasts, you are isolated—you have a strange sense of solitude and silence, with occasional fugitive apparitions of a star, a black hedge, the moon and luminous bullets. Anyone who says that, in such a situation, it would be possible to take aim and shoot at enemy soldiers on the ground, is telling fancy stories for a dime novel."

After this digression, they resumed their reminiscences.

"We walked on, with Tommy-guns on the ready, along the road leading to the junction. We recognized the spot where the trucks used to be loaded.

"Posted at a window, a German was firing at our planes, which were still coming over in long waves. The best marksman in our group let fly at him with his Tommy-gun at almost point blank range. The German dropped his rifle out of the window. We could not tell whether he was dead or merely terror-stricken.

"The road junction was deserted: the tracer bullets made a crisscross pattern in the sky above our heads. As we came into the square, we saw firemen with gilded helmets running about, some of them with buckets of water. We wondered why, at such an hour and on such a day, these men were about the streets. One or two of us, taking them for collaborators who were helping the Germans, were in favor of shooting them or at least taking them prisoners—but others opposed this, objecting that these men were unarmed. Nobody fired."

The good firemen of Sainte Mère Eglise went back home that night without realizing for a moment that their gilded helmets had caused them to be summarily court-martialed by men hidden in the shadows, who had decided in full sovereignty as to their life or death.

The group of paratroopers keeping close to the walls, their fingers ready on triggers of their Tommy-guns, assembled in the place scheduled for their company on the map, back in camp.

The appointed spot was situated on the road to Carentan at the southern entrance to Sainte Mère Eglise. A few foxholes were dug at once, then some of the men were sent out on patrol in the neighboring meadows and along the Carentan street.

"It was a little before dawn," said the fair-haired paratrooper, "at the time when night begins to dissolve. I was creeping along the houses on the right hand side of the street—two or three trucks had just gone by. I had fired on them, but they had not stopped and had disappeared in the direction of Fauville.

"Suddenly, I saw a man come out of a house on the opposite side of the street: He looked to right and left, then cautiously began to creep along the walls toward the end of the town. He was half dressed, and apparently unarmed, but his high boots and his pants widening at the thighs denoted the German officer.

"In order to make no mistake, and as in any case he could not escape me, I shouted our password: '*Flash!*'"

"He stopped. '*Was?*' he inquired.

"As I speak good German, I felt sure then that he was an enemy, and yet I added: '*Kommen Sie hier.*'"

"The man immediately took two steps toward me. Almost without thinking, I emptied my Tommy-gun at him. He lifted his arms, swung his head to right and left as if to recover his balance, and fell on his back.

"I then entered the house. It appeared to be entirely occupied by Germans. There were no civilians, and the offices were in disorder. As I was alone, I did not risk climbing to the second floor.

"Daylight was now beginning to dawn. The town seemed dead. And yet, at the windows, curtains were there and there being discreetly parted. A girl opened a window. She made signs to me, and I understood that she was saying: 'Don't be scared; the Germans have gone.'

"By this time, my group was installed. They had laid mines on Highway 13. My comrades told me that before daybreak some trucks had come in, by the Carentan street with lights full on.

"Seeing them coming from a great distance, they had had time to lay their mines and hide in the ditches bordering the road. The trucks had blown up one after the other; then the paratroopers had fired on them with their Tommy-guns and taken a few prisoners.

"The sun rose. All was calm. It seemed to us that we were still in our English village after maneuvers. Little by little, the civilians came out into the street to shake hands with us. They told us to be careful of Germans in civilian clothes who might be prowling in our midst. Furthermore, one of our patrols had just discovered two of our parachutists who had been killed and robbed of all their clothing and armament. Therefore two Germans were now going about somewhere near, dressed as American paratroopers.

"A man came out of a large courtyard bearing a tray and brought us small glasses filled with a liquid of a beautiful amber color. We emptied the glasses at a gulp and thought that we had been poisoned, that stuff burned our throats so much."

Our two friends laughed at the incident; tonight, on a tray beside them, were two small glasses full of a liquid of that same color. They pointed to it and resumed almost together: "It was Calvados and some of the best! Calvados exactly like this you're giving us tonight. But we had never drunk any of your Normandy brandy, and we know it very well now, you may be sure.

"If we stay here any length of time, we should be happy to see once again that good Frenchman whom we didn't even thank for his drinks."

"BEFORE YOU LEAVE," I said, "would you tell me perfectly frankly what you think of the French civilians you have seen during your first days on French soil?"

The answer came from the fair-haired soldier; the other was busy warming his Calvados glass between his palms, in the French manner.

"We were both wounded by the same shell a few miles from La Fière. In that village we saw nobody. When we arrived everyone had been evacuated to Sainte Mère Eglise or to the neighboring farms, but our comrades told us your compatriots had given them the maximum help, showing them during that first night where the Germans were, giving them food and drink, and pointing out the dangerous spots in the marshes."

"In the Rue de Carentan, when the fighting started, we had to threaten some of your citizens in order to oblige them to go home. Shells and bullets were sweeping the street and occasionally, from our foxholes we would see a man or a woman run across the road.

"On the Tuesday evening, in the thick of the battle, an old lady went by in front of us. She was going to fetch help from some friends at Fauville, right inside the German zone. With great anxiety we watched her walk away with small steps, in open country, under fire and along a mined road, the ditches of which were used as trenches by the enemy. Her figure grew smaller and our eyes followed her till she disappeared on the horizon. She didn't come back." . . .

They left, repeating: "Good-by, we'll come back one day from the States."

Some day, I am sure, they will come back, attracted by their memories, like the first time, they and their comrades will come on board C-47 planes.

Before landing at Cherbourg airport, they will fly low over Sainte Mère Eglise and perhaps, over the cemeteries, they will drop, like so many-colored parachutes, flowers picked the day before in America.

MONTHS HAVE PASSED and the time of the heavy rains has come, foreshadowing the great cold spell. It is now a long time since we heard gunfire.

The victorious Army has rushed through France at full speed. Mud has taken the place of dust. Some of the roads, turned into slimy tracks, have become useless to wheeled traffic. Rue Nationale Number 13, now renamed "Rue de General de Gaulle" is nothing but a quagmire of muddy water which spurts up from under the wheels of the tractors.

Our beaches have kept their importance and are still used to pour war materials into the country. At night, without a stop, the long outbound and inbound convoys, with searchlights blazing, light up the horizon.

A few camps still remain, and at night, when illuminated, they appear to be floating on the marshes.

The great story is over for Sainte Mère Eglise. . . . Two cemeteries seem to mount guard at the entrance to the town.

General Theodore Roosevelt reposes there.

Under the white crosses, all alike, without any difference in regard with the rank, cradled in their tombs by the rustling of the wide-spread Star-Spangled Banner which floats all day long over this sacred earth:

General Theodore Roosevelt, Corporal James White, the Lieutenants Jerry Baker and John Mauney, the Captains James Harvey and John Garrabrant, Colonel Thaddeus Dullin, the Soldiers William James, Fred Epstein and Cecil Barnes, and so many others, now rest fraternally united in death.

All through the summer, flowers grow on this spot, carefully tended by pious hands, in recognition of the magnificent bravery of these men, who held on to our soil up to their last breath, and prevented the total destruction of our little township.

Sainte Mère Eglise, which supported the first shock, is tending her wounds.

Despite her bruises she still has her church, her Roman stone, symbol of our ancient history—her great trees, and most of her houses, built higgledy-piggledy in the course of centuries.

She will be the old Norman city beside the neighboring towns: Valognes, Montebourg, Pont l'Abbe, which will be rebuilt in modern style.

She will remain the "Town of Remembrance" exactly as the parachutists saw her at dawn on the 6th of June 1944—as she was seen by the thousands of Americans who went through her or camped in her fields, when a hail of shells was descending on her and she represented for America the very heart of liberated France.

Champion of the Santa

GLIDING over the Santa Fe Trail today—amidst the luxury of good roads and good cars—it is so easy to forget much of the courage, endurance, and even romance that rode with early users of this Trail. These qualities, a very part of the Trail itself, are nowhere more vividly emphasized than in the non-stop endurance horseback ride of Felix Xavier Aubrey, a youth of nineteen years. This was made over the old Santa Fe Trail one hundred and one years ago, and became an epic of the plains for all time.

Along the St. Louis riverfront in the spring of 1846 there must have been much in the way of exciting activity to arouse the interest of any imaginative boy. The joined waters of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers had become the highway along which the traffic from the West found its way into the Mississippi Valley and then down to New Orleans. Of all the traffic which flowed to and past the city, probably there was no more interesting part than that contributed by the traders from the Southwest who made St. Louis the destination of the goods brought from the Southwest and the Plains region.

No doubt young Felix Xavier Aubrey spent every minute of his spare time along the river-front that spring. Born of French-Canadian parents, there was more than a drop of the old French *voyageur* blood in his veins, for of all the engrossing sights upon the levee, there was none that held his attention stronger than the activity of the traders from the Southwest in superintending the unloading of their goods from the Plains and beyond.

Coming nineteen years old that spring, young Felix was just like any other youth of that age. He probably visualized the huge boats breasting their way upstream against the current of the mighty Missouri—the outfitting of the traders at Independence, Missouri, the starting-point of the Santa Fe Trail—then the winding of the colorful wagon-trains across the plains of Kansas, Indian Territory and New Mexico. Perils of Indians, thirst, hunger, storms, hard work and fatigue—all of these held nothing but glamour for him.

For four years Felix had worked in one of the large mercantile establishments of the city, where he had won

advancement through his industry. This was tame business, though, when Adventure called; so one spring morning Felix heeded the call and went up the river on one of the very steamboats the unloading of which he had so enviously watched so many times.

At Independence, Aubrey invested his savings of four years in a regulation trader's outfit—a wagon and mules to pull it, a stock of goods to sell at the other end of the Trail or to barter for the spoils of the mountains and plains, and of course the necessary outfit of arms.

Then Aubrey joined a caravan that was preparing to toil its slow way across the plains to Santa Fe eight hundred miles away. At that time it took anywhere from a month to six weeks to make the trip from Independence to Santa Fe. The schedule for the military mail was about thirty days, but this was a much closer schedule than any wagon-train could hope to maintain.

From Independence the trail bent away to the southwest across the gently rolling plains of Kansas. It passed through Council Grove (named from the council site of several tribes of Plains Indians) then struck across to the Arkansas River at the Great Bend region of that stream. From Great Bend it followed up the river to Fort Dodge where it again angled to the southwest, passing through the extreme western tip of what was then Indian Territory and on through New Mexico to Santa Fe.



F. X. Aubrey, Pathfinder

The life and excitement along the trail were all that Felix had pictured them. Roving bands of Indians of the Plains tribes—the Pawnee and the Cheyenne—and farther to the Southwest the Comanche and Apache, made it necessary to keep a constant lookout. For safety the traders traveled in trains as large as could be conveniently assembled. At night it was necessary to be especially vigilant, since that was the favorite time for the Indians to attempt the stealing of the traders' work stock.

The country through which the trail led was of course a hunter's paradise. Numerous bands of many varieties of deer bounded away as the wagons drew along. Flights of quail, prairie chicken, and other game-birds arose in startled confusion and went winging across the level prairies. Most amazing of all were the countless herds of buffalo that came from the south on their spring pilgrimage from the Texas plains and at times actually threatened to crush the wagons of the trains beneath their thundering hoofs.

THE caravan with which young Felix was joined spent five weeks in making the journey from Independence to Santa Fe. The time consumed and the hardships of the journey gave the boy the idea for the feat which was to make him, for years, the most talked-of man in the whole West. When they arrived at Santa Fe, Felix promptly disposed of his goods, mules and wagon, then calmly announced that he would make the return trip to Independence in eight days, going on horseback.

Experienced plainsmen, hearing this bold announcement, believed the boy must be crazy, for he not only declared that he would make the return trip in eight days, but that he would make the journey entirely alone. There was plenty of room to doubt his ability to carry out the venture, since the hardships of the trail and the time limit set would tax the endurance of both man and horse.

Undeterred by the scoffing of the plainsmen, Felix made arrangements for relays of fresh horses along the route, and early one morning set forth. He arrived at Independence about noon of the eighth day following, immediately invested in another trader's outfit and again joined a caravan

Fe Trail

In 1846 he rode the eight hundred miles from Santa Fe to Independence in five days, seventeen hours.

by

L. R. GRINSTEAD



for Santa Fe. When he arrived there, he found himself considerable of a hero, for the news of his feat had traveled forward along the trail. The experienced plainsmen, who knew the dangers of the trail and the fortitude necessary to endure them, acclaimed him as a boy of courage and perseverance far beyond his years.

Young Felix made rather light of his feat and declared that he could make the trip in even less time. So sure was he of this, that he maintained he could make the trip in six days, and with determination set about his preparations for the new trial. Relays of horses, carefully selected for speed and endurance, were arranged for at the scattered settlements along the trail. Then one September morning in that fall of 1846 this bold youth rode out of Santa Fe on the start of what stands to this day as an endurance horseback ride.

No telegraph or radio flashed the news of his coming, nor were there any daily newspapers to spread the tidings of the progress of his ride. Only the few settlers at the scattered settlements where his relays of fresh horses were stationed knew of his progress. There were many though who would have been glad to have caught sight of him along the way. Hundreds of eagle-eyed Apache and Comanche were somewhere nearby the trail he had to traverse, and any of these would have given his best warbonnet to have sighted this dauntless youth who galloped so recklessly through their hunting-grounds.

Five days and 17 hours after he left Santa Fe, Aubrey rode into Independence. In all of the eight hundred miles

he had stopped only for changes of horses. He had eaten while galloping along, and had caught snatches of sleep by tying himself into the saddle. The ride was further complicated by the time of year in which it was made—in the season of the fall rains which had swollen the streams he must ford and which had made the going heavy all along the way.

An eyewitness who saw young Aubrey's arrival at Independence described it thus: "When Aubrey rode up to the old Holland House there at Independence, we were waiting for him and ran to help him from his saddle. His saddle was literally caked with blood, and we had to help him from it and into the house. The first thing he called for was some ham and eggs, and when he had eaten these, he promptly fell to sleep and slept for about six hours. At that time Aubrey was a well-grown boy weighing about one hundred and fifty pounds, and was of a wiry, muscular build."

AS the long-distance endurance flights of later-day aviators brought to them fame and renown, so did this endurance ride of Felix Aubrey bring renown to him. The news of his exploit traveled fast and far over the plains and along the border settlements, where his name became a household word. While history does not say so, no doubt proud parents named boy babies after him in the hope that their offspring would grow up with the courage and strength of this youth. About the biggest honor that could be conferred was the naming of a new, fast Missouri River steamboat after him. This was a signal honor, for at

that time river traffic was reaching the peak of its development, and some of the boats upon the river were veritable floating palaces.

Young Felix now took his place as a man among the experienced plainsmen. Santa Fe became his home, and his life was spent in searching out new trails and in assisting in the development of the Southwest. So well known did he become as a pathfinder that he was employed on numerous surveys in that region. Even today his name and memory are perpetuated in numerous place-names throughout all the Southwest, particularly in Arizona. He probably became best known as a pathfinder for his selection of the route through the mountains which the Central Pacific Railroad chose over which to reach the California coast.

He came to a tragic end in 1854, when he was not yet quite thirty years old. One day he was riding into Albuquerque, returning from one of his numerous pathfinding expeditions. Upon the porch of the hotel there was sitting a man with whom Aubrey had had some previous difference. Aubrey stopped to talk to this man about their difficulties, and in the quarrel that followed, Aubrey was fatally stabbed.

He was buried in the little mission churchyard at Albuquerque, and thus one of the colorful careers of the Southwest came to an untimely end—as did so many others of the period. He had made a reputation for courage and endurance in a period when courage and endurance were common virtues, and had he lived in the present period he would perhaps have won renown in some equally commendable fashion.

DRAGON HORNS

A MEMORABLE CHINESE DRAMA BY THE VERSATILE AUTHOR OF
"SNAKE RIVER JIM" AND "HONOR TO YOU, ELDER BROTHER."

BY WILBUR S. PEACOCK

IT was a fine funeral, worthy of a red-button Mandarin; and the people of Kuming wailed softly in their throats, when the family and the mourners and the friends paced their way to the graveyard.

Sunlight through the low clouds dappled the ground, and there was no dust, for the morning dew was not yet gone. Five priests led the way, chanting their cries to the air, prayer-wheels spinning in their lean hands. A paper dragon danced next, its eight pairs of naked human feet patting the ground in ritualistic cadence, while the scarlet-tongued mouth, with its glittering white teeth, menaced the devils who lurked for Yong Lee's soul.

Aaaahiee! It was a fine funeral, and only Yok Gee could have borne so terrible and great an expense. A hundred mourners, clad in the white of death, keened their grief at the skies, wailing and lamenting so that the gods would know Yong Lee was a man worthy of admittance into bliss. Fire-crackers spat in crisp strings of explosions; and one priest carried a pagoda pyre on which thick pads of false rice-money burned with yellow flames and gray smoke to propitiate the gods.

The coffin—ah, it was such as none in the village of Kuming could ever remember seeing. Glistening polished wood atrim with silver handles, and girded by tucked silks of wine and green, it rode to the final resting-place atop the shoulders of eight men. Old Wai Soong had worked long hours on the coffin, and it was the acme of its skill. He had ripped the planks and planed them and fitted them with cunning skill, until the coffin was a whole of gleaming beauty.

The people sucked their breath in appreciation and felt pride that such a man as Yok Gee lived in their village. True, he was hard, but he was also just; and the people respected him for his greatness, as they had respected his father and his father's father.

He walked now, as humbly as any man, following the coffin of the man he had adopted for his blood son.

He wore white silk of mourning, and his face was set with an expression such as none had ever seen before. His queue was streaked with white,

and he wore it proudly, for he was not of the new generation which cropped its hair short in barbarous fashion. His chin-whiskers were thin and short, but they marked him for a man of culture and wisdom, and he carried his head high in pride, his dark eyes never swerving from the path he followed.

Mei Mei came after him, hidden in the depths of the sedan chair, carried by four porters. She could not be seen, but those close by could hear the sound of her grief through the heavy painted curtains of rustling silk; and it was said about the home that, when the news of Yong Lee's death had been brought by a frightened messenger, the blood had rushed from her head and she had crumpled to the floor.

If Yok Gee heard the laments of his wife, he gave no heed, for it was not seemly that a man should console his woman in public; and if their adopted son was dead, then it was the way of the gods, and not for mortal man to fathom.

Always had it been that way with Yok Gee: always was the way of the gods the right way with him; yet if he nudged affairs with the finger of his mind—well, the gods understood, and his house had prospered.

He walked slowly this morning, for the years were deep in him; and almost idly did he envy Yong Lee the eternal rest which was his from this day. And then, because he knew the thought was not a worthy one, he cast it aside, the cloak of his destiny mantling him ever tighter.

He felt grief deep within him, but it was of the mind and not the heart, for his passion had burned itself out the day, six months before, when Yong Lee had brought the news that his friend, the only son, had died in the great war. Since that day Yok Gee had walked through a world which held little meaning. One son he had sired, and now the boy was gone. No more would his open smile and jesting tongue lighten the heart of his father; now he lay deep in a nameless grave, and only the living suffered.

Yok Gee sighed as he walked his lonely way in the procession. He was too old now, he knew, to begin again, even though Mei Mei warmed his flesh

and dispelled the chill of age. No, the house of Yok would die with him before long.

The sun beat fiercely on his head, and he bowed beneath its strength, perspiration deepening the ivory of his features. The chanting of the mourners seemed far away, and the graveyard was a bleak place, shrines naked in the sunlight, leaning drunkenly as though watered with potent rice wine.

The priests circled the grave, its shadowed ugly blackness reaching for their slipped feet, and their pæan of lamentation swelled in power. The mourners slipped about the porters and their burden and ranged themselves so that their chorus rang free and clear. The townspeople stood to one side, silent now, and their crooked fingers warded off the demons who hovered in impotent hunger over all.

Yok Gee stopped, rooting himself firmly on wide-spaced feet. The sedan chair rested at his side, and he could hear the heavy breathing of the sweating porters.

The head priest lifted his robbed arms, and the crowd fell silent. Only muffled sobbing came from the curtained sedan chair. And even it ceased, when Yok Gee's veined hand slid to the edge of the curtain and partially drew it.

THE priest's voice rose bright and harsh, and moans rocked the listeners. The coffin-bearers lifted their burden over the grave, swinging it between them now with the silk ropes. It rocked a bit, catching the new sunlight, and the people were impressed with its elegance.

Yok Gee tried not to watch. His gaze turned blank, and he saw nothing of the present. It was as though he peered back into the past.

He heard the gasp of appreciation from the mourners, when they saw the last mark of Yok Gee's generosity and devotion; and he bent a bit, coming to the present for a moment, watching the doll-like face of Mei Mei in the sedan chair.

"The dragon grew horns," he said softly, so softly that no one heard but his wife.

And then he dropped the curtain.



"Yok Gee must die," Yong Lee said. . . . And the keen knife-blade cut its mark into the bark of the great tree which was the trysting-place.



"I recall a tale, one which might concern us, were it not that we are honorable people."

There had been another curtain beneath his hand six months before when Yong Lee had brought the news from the south. He had felt his nails bend from the pressure of his hurt, when he heard the young man's words, and a coldness had clamped his heart.

"I grieve for you," Yong Lee had said. "Yok Tom was a brother to me. We ate and slept and fought together; he saved my life, and was struck down by a bullet while doing so."

He was thin, dirty and tired, but his eyes were bright. He stood erect; it was only when he walked, that one could see he had been wounded in the leg. His clothes were torn and worn, and he stank of the road he had walked and ridden for so many days.

Yok Gee felt the tears crowding his lids; but he could not display his grief before this stranger. Gravely he nodded and touched the gong at his side. Two servants appeared noiselessly.

"This man is my guest," Yok Gee said. "Prepare a bath and rich clothes. And give him food, for he has traveled far."

"You are too kind," Yong Lee said humbly, but a glitter was in his eyes now, even as he bowed.

And when he was gone, Yok Gee stared blindly at the floor. He was alone now in truth. Meiling was gone these ten years; and now their only-born lay in a soldier's grave. Mei Mei was here, but she was of no importance in this. Barely five months had passed since he had bought her with a handful of ruddy gold, and her thoughts were on rich foods and fine clothes and dazzling perfumes. No, she held no part in this; and that was the more terrible, for he had none to share his agony of heart.

And so he rocked his head in the passion of defeat and loneliness and thought of the years ahead without a stalwart son at his side. He thought of the grandchildren he would never have, and of the laughter he would never hear. Tears stained his cheeks, unheeded, for none was there to see.

And in that following hour he understood how little a man he truly was. Men he could command, and money he could count until his hands grew weary; yet he was poor beside the poorest man whose sons had come home from fighting.

His face was set, when Yok Lee appeared again. Pain touched his eyes

when he saw the clothes which his new guest wore. They had been intended for another soldier. Yet he made no sign, and his voice was full and friendly as he talked.

They ate of rich pork and green bean-sprouts and a dozen other delicacies, for Yok Gee liked the taste of food, and none was denied at his table. And there were slender glasses of fragrant rice wine, and later tiger-bone wine which set their blood to singing and loosened their tongues.

It was then the idea came full-flowed into Yok Gee's mind, and he thought of it for a moment, drawing deep on the smoke of his pipe. Yong Lee toyed with a painted fan, moving it gracefully in slender hands, for the evening was hot and close.

He was a handsome man, the pale gold of his features even lighter by contrast with the blackness of his hair. He wore the hair short; but that could be excused because he was of the new generation and because he had served in the army. He was short, for he was a southern man, but he was wiry; and except for his wounded leg, he would have walked with a tigerish ease. If his eyes were not wide and full, then that was not too bad a thing; and his ready smile erased the slyness from his gaze.

He was good to look upon, and Yok Gee's son could have made no finer friend, from the tales Yong Lee told of their comradeship. They were of a kind, with their enthusiasm and slight cynicism; yet they were respectful of their elders; and too, they both could read and write, which Yok Gee knew was a virtue not many men possessed.

And so Yok Gee looked at the young man, and a smile touched his mouth.

"My home is yours for as long as you wish to stay," he said. "Your people, so you have said, are gone—as is my son. The house will be lonely, and it is my wish that you stay and brighten it."

Yong Lee rocked his head in wonder. "The honor is too great," he said humbly. "I am a mean person, and you are great and wealthy."

Yok Gee looked about the paneled room, with its stained walls and glittering lamps and polished floor, and a bitterness touched his mouth.

"It is a lonely house," he said quietly. "It needs young blood."

And so it was that Yong Lee came to live in the great house. His laughter was good and his tongue sly with jest; and almost was it as it had been when the only-born was there.

Yok Gee grew young again in mind, and he laughed as he had not done in days. He laughed, and his to-be son laughed with him; and the villagers marveled, for this was but again a thing to be pointed at with pride about Yok Gee.

And when Yok Gee brought his wife Mei Mei to meet Yong Lee, it was as it should be, a natural thing. A stranger could not have looked upon the wife's face, for such was not the custom. But Yong Lee was no longer a stranger; and Yok Gee felt his heart swell with pride when he saw the admiration in Yong Lee's face at sight of Mei Mei.

There was a spark between them that was good to see, for both were of an age, and Yok Gee knew that Mei Mei pined for word of the outer world from which she had come. Now she could hear news from Yong Lee that her husband could not give her; and perhaps she would not be as impatient about her life here as she had been before.

"He is a good man, this Yong Lee," he said to her at night, when the house was still and they lay together in the bed. "He is my son-to-be."

She made no answer, nor did he expect one, for it was not her place to advise him. Her body lay fragrant and warm in the curve of his arm, and he touched her lightly, almost absently, for the heat of his strength was long ebbing.

And later, when she slept softly at his side, he lay awake thinking of what the future could be. Yong Lee was of good blood; he would make a good son. He would be adopted, and would do his share of running the many affairs of the family, and some day he would be the master of the house.

Yok Gee fell asleep thinking that, and contentment was his such as he had not felt in months. His dreams were kind; and if Mei Mei drew away from him early in the morning to stare wide-eyed at the moon, he did not know or care.

DAYS passed swiftly and grew into weeks, and months followed, and Yok Gee's house was a place of gaiety. Friends came in as they had not done in a long time, and while music swirled lightly in the lamps' glow, the sound of talk and laughter filled the nooks and crannies.

Brown baked ducks and glistening lengths of pork, and red sugar and small rice-cakes dressed with colored seeds and sugar were on the table. And such was Mei Mei's taste, there were mandarin fish and bird's-nest soup and bamboo sprouts and chestnuts. Delicacy after delicacy were for the taking, and none was happier than Yok Gee when the tables were bare after a feasting.

Spring passed, and greenness was in the land. Yok Gee prospered and found it necessary to be gone overnight on many trips. But he did not worry now, as once he had, for a man was in the house to protect that which was his.

He came and went, and he was content with everything. And every day Yong Lee became more a part of him. He showed the young man how the books and accounts were kept, and Yong Lee grasped their meaning instantly, and so skilled was he that Yok Gee had no more worries over them.

He entrusted more and more of the management to Yong Lee, wanting him to know what must be done when he died; and the man did the work laughingly, and more swiftly than it had been done in years.

And in his newly found freedom, Yok Gee began to stay away for more than one night at a time. Three nights was not unusual. And since he told his house when he would return, there was no worry, and always hot food awaited him when he entered the door.

He was happy, for never had things gone so well in the home. Mei Mei was finally content; her soft voice was raised no longer in pouting anger. She kohled her eyes and she smelled of flowers, and when he cupped her face in his veined hands, it was as though he shielded a quince blossom. He was happy for her and for himself.

SO when his awakening came, it was rude and brutal and bitter.

One night he returned home unexpectedly and made no noise as he entered the house. He took off his traveling-cloak and his hat and went through the rooms to where Mei Mei had her private house within a house.

He heard the voices, and hesitated, for one was a man's, and that of course could never be, for no man stepped into Mei Mei's house except himself.

He listened, and even peered through a crack at the doorway; and quick anger stabbed at his heart and he felt murder lust touch him for the

moment. And then he acknowledged the foolishness of his passion, for nothing could be wrong.

Yong Lee was now an adopted son, and his rights were those of his father. If he talked with Mei Mei, it was because that was Yok Gee's wish. If fault there was to find, then it was to be found in Yok Gee for his unworthy suspicions. And so he tiptoed back to the door, and then made a great noise when he entered. And if it had not been that Mei Mei was alone, and that Yong Lee did not greet him at any time that night, Yok Gee would have been content.

BUT the seeds of suspicion had been sown that night, and they rooted and grew, and Yok Gee sensed that they led on fact. He was not a fool, and his mind told him that Mei Mei's young body craved more than his worn touch; and Yong Lee was a handsome man, with the animal in him at full flood.

And so Yok Gee set a trap, hoping he would snare nothing, but knowing that he would.

He went to Suchow, waving good-bys and promising gifts; and if Yong Lee's narrowed eyes laughed at him—well, they laughed at all things, or so it seemed.

He came back that night, sneaking like a robber through the night, and slipping unscen into the house. His bared feet made no sound on the flooring and he went cautiously toward the house within a house, his breath hot and stifling in his throat and nostrils.

He heard no sound in his wife's rooms, and a breath of relief cooled his heart. And then soft laughter came from the garden, and he went that way, slipping from shadow to shadow until he could see.

He made no sound, and his face was a graven mask as he watched. Never had he thought to have his honor stained thus; never had he thought his shame could be so deep.

They were together, on the bench which circled the great tree, and their lips were pressed tightly in the manner of foreigners, a thing of which he had heard but never seen. They were one, and he watched, and almost did he step out and slay them as they sat.

The knife felt small and deadly in his hand, and he shivered. Never had he slain a man, and he was not certain that he could. And then the moment was over, and he knew that murder was not for him as of this moment.

At last the lovers drew apart, and Yong Lee's soft laugh was unshaken and confident and alive with conquest. Mei Mei pressed back against the tree bole, and her hands came up against the man's chest.

"This is madness," she said. "Each time, you say you will not touch me, and yet—" Her voice trailed away.



"Boil it. Place the water in his wine. . . There will be no noise and no pain."

Her hair was black as night and her pale face was an oval in the moonlight. And when Yong Lee drew her close again, she did not fight as Yok Gee hoped, but lay quiescent.

"Some day," Yong Lee said, "all this will be mine. Yok Gee is old; he cannot live long."

"I will not listen," Mei Mei said, and broke from the circle of his arms and went toward the house. And when Yong Lee followed, he met only the blankness of a door.

And Yok Gee stood silently, watching. He was caught in the web of his emotions and did not know what to do. He saw Yong Lee pass out of sight through another doorway; and then he went out of the garden into the night.

BUT if Mei Mei did not listen the night that Yok Gee watched, she listened on other nights. And always Yok Gee was there. The second time, he had meant to confront the lovers, and a single sentence had halted his step from concealment.

"Yok Gee must die," Yong Lee said, and the old Chinese in the shadows read murder in the words.

And so he listened each night when he was supposed to be away from the house. He heard Yong Lee's sly words eating at the conscience of Mei Mei, and saw her resistance fade before the demands of his strength. He heard the speeches of lovemaking and saw the kisses exchanged, and his heart constricted like a drouth-struck fruit.

He saw the keen knife-blade of Yong Lee's cut its mark into the bark of the great tree which was the trysting place, and when he read the cryptic writing later, thought at first to use an ax and destroy forever the living proof of that which was happening. Then reason returned, and he left the garden, as he had before, to return at another time, as though his trip had been far away.

The days paced by; and sometimes it was hard for Yok Gee to believe the thing which he knew was happening. He thought of a hundred ways of stopping the affair, and knew that none of them would work. It had taken ten years, after Meiling's death, for him to seek another wife; and he had chosen Mei Mei from out of a hundred, and built a new life about her. He blamed himself more than her that she was untrue. It had been his duty to keep her sheltered, and he had failed.

And despite his knowledge of the perfidy of Yong Lee, he felt it hard to judge the man. Yong Lee was of the new generation, with a new code of conduct; while he might be vicious, perhaps that was because Yok Gee had been too generous and had not impressed the other with true values.

Yet even as he made excuses, Yok Gee knew his thinking was wrong.

He tried the experiment of sending Yong Lee away on business; but oddly,

the day of the second trip, Yong Lee fell ill and confined himself to the house. It was only when Yok Gee went himself that the young man became well again.

He thought of keeping Mei Mei in her house within a house, and felt his heart torn at the thought. She was not a captive, but his wife, and even though he could not understand fully why she should turn against him, he felt a dull sympathy for her.

He thought to talk to them, and brought them together at a meal one evening, serving the most choice of delicacies; and when they were fed, he puffed his pipe and his face smiled with benign good humor.

"And how is it, this being my son?" he asked Yong Lee. "Do the duties tire you, and do you wish that you had never come?"

Yong Lee narrowed his eyes, and twisted the gold ring on his finger. His robe was of weighted silk, and his slippers gold with crimson soles. He sat across from Mei Mei, and his gaze touched hers fleetingly before he answered.

"Never have I known such happiness," he said gravely. "Never have I been so content. I hope I prove worthy of your love."

Yok Gee nodded slowly, and felt a sickness touch his heart. He was beginning to see deep into this son he had adopted, and what he saw he did not like. Buttery tongue and oily words, and a slyness that only a wriggling snake should have.

"This will all be yours some day, Yong Lee," he said quietly. "I am an old man and my days are running short."

"*Aaiiee!* Do not say that!" Mei Mei said swiftly. "You are in the flower of your strength."

Yok Gee bent over his pipe, but his wise old eyes had caught the flicker of gazes between his slender wife and adopted son.

"I recall a tale," he said finally. "It is one which might concern us three, were it not that we are honorable people."

"A tale—concerning us?" Mei Mei said, and for a moment fear touched her voice.

"Yes, a tale of the Moon Dragon and his Princess," Yok Gee settled back more comfortably. "Once, long ago, there lived by the Lake of the Silver Moon a gentle dragon. His eyes were like green jade, and his scales like polished gold and red plates. Eight legs he had, and he was very fierce as he roamed the countryside. He fed from the country, but he harmed none weaker than himself, and he was admired by all who knew him."

"One day, he took a Princess to be his wife, and she served his comfort as no servant ever could. They were happy, and their happiness had no

faults. And then came a golden bull from across the Lake, and he was smitten by the Princess, and vowed to take her for his own.

"And this he did, by stealth and in the dark of night. And when the dragon complained that this was not as it should be, the golden bull laughed and challenged the dragon to a duel. But the dragon had no horns and he could not fight, and so the bull had his way with the Princess."

"One night, the bull was with the Princess, and he shed his horns beside the cave entrance, so that he would not injure the Princess. And while he spoke soft words to her, the dragon found the golden horns and fitted them to his head. Then he rushed into the cave, his green eyes glowing fiercely, and with one mighty lunge, he slew the bull."

With this Yok Gee fell silent. He saw the faintness in Mei Mei's face and the slow realization coming to Yong Lee's eyes, and he wondered if that had been the way to tell them of his knowledge.

"It is a good tale," Yong Lee said at last, "but I have heard others as fine. And too"—his sly laughter came softly across the table—"the bull was a fool to drop his horns."

Yok Gee nodded, placing his pipe aside. And if his smile when he looked at his wife and son was set and strained—well, he was no longer young, and the night was late.

"I am glad that we three are not like those in the tale," he said. "Our love is great, and our honor is above all things." He came to his feet. "I have work to do."

He went from the room, going toward the place he used for working over his accounts, and when he could no longer be heard, he took a side passage back to the eating-room and listened at the bamboo curtain.

"He knows," Mei Mei said in fright. "Can you not see that the tale was bad a warning? His honor has been stained, and this is but his way of hoping it will be cleared."

"Pfeh!" Yong Lee blew his breath in disdain. "He is an old fool and better dead. He is rich and his money does him no good, and it will be better when it fills our purses."

YOK GEE leaned against the wall to still his trembling. Never in his memory had he willingly hurt a man, and now he wanted only to see his adopted son dead and his own honor clear and untarnished.

But such was his code that now, as before, he could not confront the lovers. To admit that such a condition existed within his own home was to bring shame upon his ancestors. No, some other way must be found.

Yong Lee was talking again, and his words hissed like the sound of



"A mandrake," Yong Lee said. . . "He will die as though a devil had crushed his heart."

steam. "He is too smart," he said, "and our time grows short. Tomorrow night he must die."

"No, I am afraid," Mei Mei said, and she swayed in fear.

Yong Lee lifted an object from his sash and laid it on the table. It was a root, brown and withered, and strangely like a man, reedy arms outstretched in pleading and tendril feet strained far apart.

"A root of the red mandrake," Yong Lee said. "Boil it until the water turns brown and then clear again. Then place it in his wine, one part of water to three of wine. It will not bother him for hours; and then he

will die as though a devil had crushed his heart. There will be no noise and no pain."

"I cannot," Mei Mei said, but already her hand was reaching for the deadly root of the red mandragora.

Her fingers closed about the root as though they would crush it to bits. And then purpose came to her small features, and she was as she had never been to Yok Gee's eyes.

"You are sure?" she asked. "I have heard of this root, but never have I seen it."

Yong Lee laughed softly. "It is the mandrake, and is hung on the foot of a coffin to poison the spirits who may

pass the priests' cries. I tell you there is no danger."

"All right," Mei Mei said. "Tomorrow night."

YOK GEE turned away. He had made his plea with the tale and had failed. He felt old and tired and betrayed and at a loss as to what to do. He could not just turn Yong Lee out, for that would cause talk and he would lose face with the people of Kuming, for loose tongues must already have marked the fact that Mei Mei and Yong Lee were of an age, while he was bending before the wind of age like grass before a reaper.

A servant dropped a tray with a clatter. . . . Yok Gee made only one movement.

He went softly to the accounting-room and opened his books, catching a brush and holding it blindly in his fingers. Figures swarmed like beetles over the pages, and he could not pin them down so that he might work.

The candles burned low in the lamps, and at last he slept, bending over the low table; and his dreams were troubled as never before, and always he chased happiness in his dream but could never catch it.

AND so it was on the next day that Yok Gee was busy. He ventured into Kuming and visited old friends and drank tea ceremoniously. His eyes were shadowed, but his smile was warm and friendly; and when his friends chided him for neglecting them, he laughed aloud and claimed he was too happy to leave his home for long. And if there was doubt in some eyes, well, the world is suspicious of any man's happiness, hoping for the worst.

At noon, he was returned to his house, and he spent the afternoon painting a wall screen with the delicate water-colors and the brushes that were part of his life. He placed Mei Mei in the center of the panel and surrounded her with quince blossoms, and she was more beautiful than they.

And in the evening, he dressed as though for a formal occasion, washing his entire body and drawing on soft fresh clothing. A servant neatly combed and plaited his hair into a long queue, and atop his head he wore the skullcap of his rank.

His mind whirled with thoughts and regrets, but he gave them no heed. The gods foretold a man's life, and who was he to challenge their designs? Dressed, and with a slender pipe smoking in his right hand, he went from his room into the eating-room and sat cross-legged at the table.

There was little talk, and Yok Gee made only small conversation about his visit to the town that morning. Mei Mei sat silently, picking at her food with her eyes avoiding those of her husband. Yong Lee was moody, as he was at times, and his narrowed eyes watched his adopted father as though to read his hidden thoughts.

There were clear soups and lichee nuts and strips of glazed pork and little honey-cakes of various shapes. And as though this were a special occasion, Yok Gee had ordered lotus wine to be served, creamy and cool. It was a treat Yok Gee usually saved for state occasions.

And when the meal was over, and soft-footed servants were clearing away the soiled dishes, Yok Gee lit his pipe



and settled back on the cushions, sighing in repletion. Mei Mei fingered the delicately-carven jade bracelet which had been her wedding gift, and only now and then did she glance from her husband to her lover.

Yong Lee talked, telling small jests, and if there was murder in his mind, there was none on his tongue. His eyes laughed, and his tongue wagged, and his tales drew smiles from the lips of his listeners. He was young and vital; and Yok Gee felt sympathy for the man, knowing how ruthless unbridled ambition can be as a master.

And then the moment came as Yok Gee had known it must. Yok Gee asked for wine, and Mei Mei poured

it at one side, her slender back covering the movements of her hands. Yong Lee fell silent, and it was as though a shiver had touched his back, so quickly did he straighten.

Yok Gee paid no heed, and his shame was a stricture about his heart. He had not thought that these he loved could do this to him, and even yet could he have found it in him to forgive. But seeing Mei Mei turn her back, and knowing what she was doing, stilled his forgiveness, and he was suddenly obsidian hard.

Mei Mei set the glasses on the table, and sat again on the floor. Her skin was white ivory now, and her hand trembled as she lifted her glass. Yong



Lee waited, as was the custom, for the elder man to drink first—and it was in that moment that a servant dropped a tray at the door with a great clatter of metal on the floor.

Mei Mei and Yong Lee started, looking about, nerves strained to the breaking-point. Yok Gee made only one movement, and he was staring at the crestfallen servant, when the plotters turned back to the table. Then Yok Gee was lifting his glass, tipping drops to the four gods, and sipping at the tiger-bone wine with evident relish.

Yong Lee sighed and drank his wine, and Mei Mei sipped at hers, her kohled eyes half shut with fright. And when the glasses were empty, Yong Lee

smiled at Yok Gee, and his voice came smoothly, faintly triumphant.

"I go gaming tonight," he said.

"Wish me luck."

"I wish you luck," Yok Gee said formally.

And then Yong Lee was gone into the night, and the house was still. And when Yok Gee finally dismissed his wife, she went gladly, glancing fearfully back, as though expecting him to crumple in death at any moment.

Yok Gee finished his pipe, and then rose to walk in the garden. He paced through the flowers and fantastically-shaped shrubbery, and the moonlight touched his face and painted deep lines about his eyes.

He went at last to his bed, and lay awake, thinking many thoughts. The minutes grew into hours, and morning was arrived, when a servant knocked on his door.

"What is it?" he asked peevishly, opening the door, and seeing the frightened face of his personal servant.

"*Aaiice!*" the man wailed. "A messenger awaits without."

"Well?" Yok Gee said impatiently. "What news does he bring?"

Two rice-workers, said the servant, had found Yong Lee's body in an irrigation ditch but minutes before. He had drowned in the night, falling from the canal's edge, and no one had been along to save his life.



Never had he slain a man, and he was not certain that he could.

It was his leg, of course, the wounded leg which was not strong and which threw him sideways at various times. And early in the morning, for he had gained most of the night, a devil had touched his leg while he walked beside the ditch, and he had drowned in the muddy water.

And so there was weeping in the house of Yok Gee. Mei Mei had lost her senses at the news, and Yok Gee had spent no time in comforting her, for as head of the family, he had many duties to perform.

Cutters brought down a tree, and the coffin-maker split and planed and polished boards and fashioned a coffin worthy of a Mandarin. Yong Lee's body lay in state until the funeral; and then it was placed in the silk-lined coffin and carried out on the shoulders of eight men.

And now this was the funeral, and the cries of the mourners rose to the skies, and the smell of exploding fire-crackers and burning rice money stained the air with pungent breath. The sun shone hotly, and dust was beginning to rise from the heated earth.

The villagers whispered and the head priest swung his prayer wheel and chanted the ceremony of death. The bearers braced the silken ropes, holding the coffin above the yawning grave. The priest finished his lament, and his hand caught the silk which was about the sides of the coffin and pulled it free. And it was then that Yok Gee's words came evenly to Mei Mei in the sedan chair.

"The dragon grew horns," he said, and watched the coffin being lowered.

A soft moan of appreciation came from the watchers; their gaze moved to Yok Gee. This was the final touch, the supreme touch of a great and fine man, and the people sucked in their breaths in soft praise.

And Yok Gee, watching, thought of that last meal with Yong Lee and Mei Mei. She had poisoned his wine and he had said nothing. But when a clumsy servant, who was clumsy only because he had been ordered to be at a certain instant, had dropped a tray, then had Yok Gee made his move.

One hand had lifted Yong Lee's glass of tiger-bone wine, and the other

had slid the poisoned liquor before the plotter. And when the lovers had turned again to the table, things appeared as they had before, except that Yong Lee drank a tasteless poison he had meant for another.

And so Yok Lee had died early in the morning, instead of his adopted father; and if the world thought it was an accident, then so much the better. A man's honor was something sacred and to be guarded; and it was better that none should know Yok Gee had replied in kind against a threat.

But Mei Mei must know. She must know that which Yok Gee had done. She must know and she must suffer, for such was her husband's code. Never again would they be man and wife in fact; but he had taken her and she would be protected as long as he lived and even after he was gone. But she must be made to know how terrible had been her crime.

And so Yok Gee stared at the coffin and the sense of justice within him was a solid force. He saw the dangling root at the foot of the coffin, a mandrake root swaying to poison any devils who might be hovering about. But it was white, and Yok Gee knew that his wife would understand, for white roots are those boiled free of poison.

He listened, and heard the soft cry from Mei Mei's throat, and knew she had seen the final touch, the thing which had drawn cries of appreciation from the onlookers.

It was a crooked symbol, cut with a keen knife blade into yielding wood. It meant constancy or unity, or literally "We are one." And it was dark against the polished wood at the foot of the coffin, as though the coffin-maker had not the strength to polish it from the wood from which the coffin was made.

Yong Lee had carved the symbol, and now it was dying with him in the bowels of the earth. The coffin's wood had come from the trysting-tree in Mei Mei's garden, and it was the last touch Yok Gee had given the funeral of the man who had betrayed him.

His honor was clean now, and Mei Mei understood all. And if she thought the gods had betrayed her, then that was her way of thinking.

But Yok Gee was not thinking of her now. He was turning away, ready to return to his lonely house. The way of the gods was a mystery to him, but he made no complaints. And if he nudged affairs with the finger of his mind, well, the gods understood, for he was a just man without the heated blood of anger. His honor was his life, and the years ahead beckoned with a lonely hand.

Almost did Yok Gee cry out against his fate; and then he walked proudly, chin high, and he smiled at the people who were his friends.



Sir John Hawkins entertains Spanyards, 1568

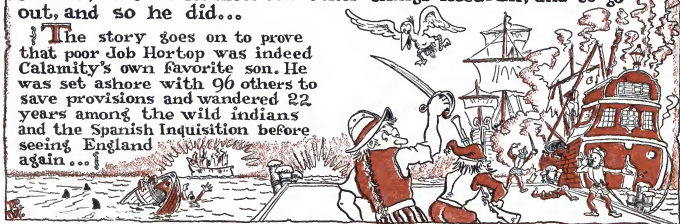
From The travailes of Job Hortop
which Sir John Hawkins set on
land within the Bay of Mexico...
in Nueva Hispana"

To be read at length in Richard
Hakluyt's "Principall Navigations of the
English Nation" here bravely engrossed by Peter Wells...



The faithlesse Spanyards, thinking all things to their desire had bene finished, suddenly sounded a Trumpet, and therewith three hundred Spaniards entred the Minion, whereat our General with a loude and fierce voyce called unto us, saying, God and Saint George, upon these traitorous villaines, and rescue the Minion, I trust in God the day shalbe ours: and with that the Mariners & souldiers leapt out of the Jesus of Lubeck into the Minion, and beat out the Spanyards, and with a shot out of her fiered the Spanyards Vice admirall, where the most part of 300. Spanyards were spoiled, and blowen over boord with powder... In this fight the Jesus of Lubeck had five shotte through her mayne Mast: her fore-mast was strooke in sunder under the hounds with a chayne shotte, and her hull was wonderfully pearced with shotte, therefore it was unpossible to bring her away... Our Generall' courageously cheered up his souldiers and gunners, and called to Samuel his page for a cup of Beere, who brought it him in a silver cup, and hee drinking to all men willed the gunners to stand by their Ordinance like men. He had no sooner set the cup out of his hand, but a demy Culverin shot stroke away the cup and a Coopers plane that stooode by the main mast, and ranne out on the other side of the ship: which nothing dismaid our Generall, for he ceased not to incourage us, saying, fear nothing, for God, who hath preserved me from this shot, will also deliver us from these traitours and villaines... He willed M. Francis Drake to come in... and to lay the Minion aboard, to take in men and other things needfull, and to go out, and so he did...

The story goes on to prove that poor Job Hortop was indeed Calamity's own favorite son. He was set ashore with 96 others to save provisions and wandered 22 years among the wild indians and the Spanish Inquisition before seeing England again...



He Who Sets a

JOHN AGUILAR was a quiet, efficient little man in or from the Immigration Service. The day after we got to San Francisco, he sat at lunch with us in our hotel—a small, select place far out on California Street. Virginia's English prudery thought it undesirable that we should be at the same hotel; under the circumstances, however, it was necessary, and of course our rooms were on different floors.

"So far," Aguilar said, "I've not received the green light from Washington, but I'm working on the case. Have you seen Howard Chaffee yet?"

Virginia Trent shook her head and gave me a look.

"No. We're going to see him tomorrow. Dr. Clements distrusts him."

"Oh!" Aguilar cocked an eye at me. "We're joining forces to save this man from murder—and yet you don't trust him?"

"Be hanged to saving him!" I said flatly. "Look: Lajpat Rai, the so-called Rajah from Hell, came here from India in order to kill four men who he thought had wronged him during the war. Three of them are now dead, Miss Trent's father among them. I've joined the effort to bring the killer to justice because Sir James Trent was my friend. Also, I know Lajpat Rai personally and in India I saved his life, and he's grateful to me. I don't care a hoot if he kills Chaffee, whom I dislike heartily—in fact, I think him little short of a scoundrel."

"Personally," Aguilar said softly, "I fancy you're right about it."

"Thanks," I said with sarcasm. "You're in it because Lajpat Rai entered this country under an assumed name, with forged papers, and because he's an expert in electronics who has turned his knowledge and aptitude to crime. But evidence—"

"Apparently you have none that will convict him of murder," Aguilar observed; "I have none to convict him of anything else—but I hope to get it. Every scientist in the world is playing with electronics and uranium, these days. Washington holds up my green light, and I'm helpless."

"As regards Chaffee," I said, "I have definite information—but I'm not telling. It may prove damned important."

Virginia eyed me speculatively, and Aguilar chuckled.

"Clements, I like your style," said he. "Talk when ready, not until;

that's my motto also. I must warn you two people that Lajpat Rai will have you closely watched."

I nodded. "Understood. But he doesn't regard us as enemies. In fact, I'd not be surprised if he called on me for help one of these days."

Aguilar asked for no explanation of this statement, but rose and shook hands.

"I'm off. I know where to find you; you'll hear from me. I'll give you a ring tomorrow night to hear what develops with Chaffee; for the present, I feel like leaving that man alone. So long!"

He departed. I ordered some more tea; I had become an addict to tea during my years in charge of a hospital in northern India.

Virginia was still eying me.

"Come, Hugh! You have some secret about Chaffee. Telling me?"

"My dear, I love you, I hope to marry you, I want to spend the rest of my life with you," I replied. "But my knowledge remains a secret from everyone—except perhaps from Howard Chaffee himself."

She frowned, then the frown dissolved into a smile.

"You'll make an admirable husband, Hugh," she said, not too lightly. "So few of them seem to know how to keep secrets! Mr. Aguilar keeps them too. We didn't learn much from him, did we?"

I smiled. "I planted bait. He'll burn to learn all I know, and will talk when the time comes. Tomorrow night he'll be still more curious. Howard Chaffee was a teak-buyer in India before the war; that's all we know. Yet he now arrives home, long after all the fracas, with a pocket filled with spending-money. What I know is more definite; Lajpat Rai told me, so it's just hearsay. I'll prove up on it some

Four men have been marked for death by the vengeful Hindu who has well earned the name of Rajah from Hell. For three of the four have been murdered; and now the fourth is threatened. . . .

A short novel, by—

**GORDON
KEYNE**

day. . . . Well, it's too bad this is such a public place—I like it, otherwise."

"Too bad it's public? Why?" Virginia's eyes widened.

"The well-known biologic urge tells me to kiss you, but reason says you wouldn't appreciate it here. Let's take a taxicab and go down to Chinatown; then people will think we're honeymooners and won't care."

"Oh! I've never seen Chinatown," she said demurely. "And I'd love to."

For a young woman who had spent most of her life in India, Virginia Trent had a surprising eagerness about Grant Street and its Oriental shops. We bought some rather good tea and a few knickknacks. I tried to lure her into looking at engagement rings, but she balked at spending so much money; evidently I would have to select one on my own.

WE spent a charming afternoon and quite forgot Lajpat Rai. I was not worried about him particularly, because a week ago in Santa Barbara he had apparently stopped a bullet, after Balfour was killed, and I thought he might be out of the game temporarily. . . . Wishful thinking, of course.

On the following afternoon Chaffee came for us in a swanky big car. He asked where Parr was. Parr, who had been Colonel Magruder's man, had attached himself to me after the murder of his master.

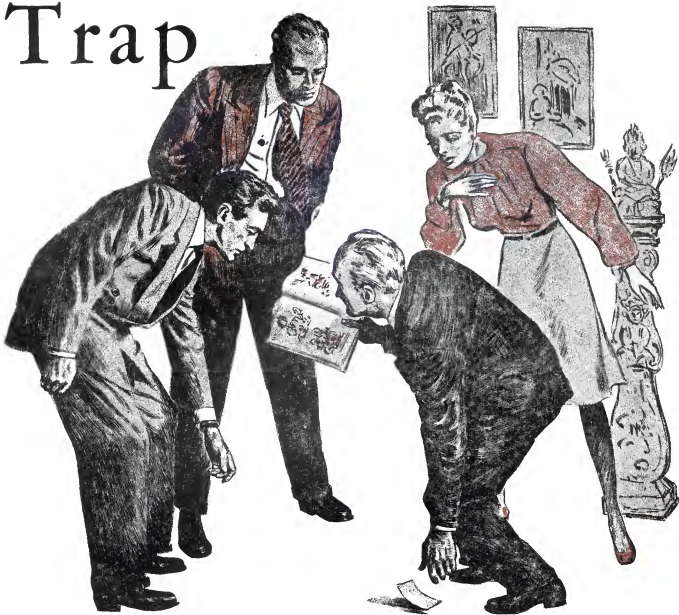
"He was called to Los Angeles, on some affair of the estate," I said. "He'll be here in a few days. So there are just the two of us at the moment."

Chaffee, leathery, hard-eyed, slangy, tucked us into his car. He was in his early fifties, I judged, and hard as nails. He drove us west to Golden Gate Park, then south to the western flank of the hills. The seaward side of the city stretched out before us, and the ocean beyond, bordered by the Esplanade.

"Got a quiet hillside place," he said. "Nice district, all built up solid; China boy to look after things. The Rajah from Hell won't crack *this* nut very easy. Wong can use a gun too."

It was a snug, secure place—a small stucco house and garage, bordered by stucco walls eight feet high, with a garden behind and a high iron-spiked fence in front. Inside, the house was up to date, handsomely furnished, and Chaffee was rightly proud of it. He had trophies of various kinds from Burma and India, and displayed them

Trap



"Arrgh! Story's a lie!" snarled Chaffee. "I knew him. My own brother was killed by those dacoits."

with a childish vanity. He was showing us a book—a Persian manuscript—containing some remarkable Mogul miniatures, which he had found in Nepal.

"A bit o' loot," said he. "All kinds of agents there—Communist, Jap, Chinese, Soviet. This here Lajpat Rai was one. I got this book from his effects. It was me identified him as the famous bandit when we nailed him."

"He claims it was all framed on him, and false," I said.

Chaffee snarled. "Arrgh! That's a lie! I knew him. My own brother Gerard was killed by those dacoits, near the Tibet border. He had done well, too, and had made money. Why, he had two teak companies going—"

Something fell out of the book and slid to the floor; a small slip of paper on which a few words were written. Chaffee picked it up, glanced at it, and

his leathery face went white. He hastily pocketed the slip of paper and called Wong, questioning him about any strangers who might have been in the house.

Wong was an alert, cheerful fellow, no longer young, and spoke fluent English. Nobody had been here today, he said; but yesterday a man from the electric-light company had called and checked up on wiring installations.

Chaffee dismissed him and led us out into the garden, which was private and charming. Delicious tea was served with mint and jasmine, and our host spoke of Aguilar.

"He couldn't show up today. Acts sort of huffy, if you ask me—standoff guy. Well, I have some information on Lajpat Rai I'm willing to throw in the pot, and if Aguilar won't work with us, he can go without. You ready to talk business, Dr. Clements?"

I said yes, and asked if he had hired any guards.

Chaffee sniffed impatiently.

"No. When Parr comes, he and Wong can act. The fewer people around, the better. Do you think Lajpat Rai is here in town now?"

I shrugged. "You know as much about him as I do."

"Well, step inside to my den, while I get that data on him. Excuse us a minute, Miss Trent; be right back."

We went into the house, to a pleasant den overlooking the garden. Here Chaffee produced some regal cheroots, and taking one, I ventured a question.

"Pardon the personal angle—there's a reason. Did you inherit a good deal of money from your brother who died in Tibet?"

"Aye. Everything. A goodish lot." Chaffee turned, his sharp eyes boring into me. "Who told you that?"

"Lajpat Rai, the Rajah from Hell. He also said your brother was not dead but alive, that he had rescued him and was keeping him safe. I thought I'd better warn you."

The man stood stock-still. After a minute he took from his pocket the bit of paper which had fallen from the book and handed it to me, without a word. I looked at the writing:

"I'll drop in to see you one of these days. —Gervard."

"That's his fist," said Chaffee. "How did it get in that book? Electric man, yesterday, slipped it in. No body else has been here. That devil Lajpat Rai is at work, all right! Well, thanks for letting me know."

I followed him back outside. We said nothing to Virginia of this by-play, but settled down with our cheroots and Chaffee gave me the information he had gathered. This was that Lajpat Rai had entered the country at San Francisco six months ago, under the name of Hari Lal, a student, and had papers to prove his identity.

"All forged, of course," sniffed Chaffee. "Aguilar can sweat on that, all right. It's his business. Who can prove that the guy is actually Lajpat Rai, though? That man is supposed to be dead back in India—heir to the Rajah of Sirvath."

"You're getting things balled up," I said, and Virginia laughed uneasily. "I want evidence that he was accessory to the murder of Sir James Trent, which he was. He has killed three of the men who allegedly framed him and jailed him in India; you're the fourth. If he's deported, aren't you safe?"

"Until next time, maybe," Chaffee said sulkily. "I want to see him planted. And that's what I want from you—help in locating him. You know him. You tell me where to find him, Clements; that's all. I'll see to the rest; I've got ways and means. But it's got to be soon—inside of two days."

RELATIONS were becoming more strained. I liked Chaffee even less. Now, for the first time, I suspected his pose of wanting no one but Parr and Wong there. He was playing a deep game of some sort. I was glad when Virginia made a move to depart. Chaffee ran out his car, insisting on driving us.

"We don't seem to be getting far with any campaign of precautions," I said to him as he drove over Twin Peaks road and headed downtown.

He chuckled. "Leave it to me; it's my fight," he replied. "What I want is all the info I can get on this fellow Lajpat Rai. Give me whatever you get. Send Parr to me—he's an honest man. That house of mine will make the prettiest trap you ever saw."

"He who sets a trap," chimed in Virginia, "had better be sure what

game he expects to catch in it, Mr. Chaffee."

He chuckled anew at this. "Thanks, I'll bear that in mind, Miss Trent."

He delivered us safely at the hotel, gave me his card and phone number, said we must keep in touch, and drove away. I was glad to see him go.

Finding no mail, I guided Virginia into the tiny cocktail lounge, found a table for safe conversation, secured the proper drinks, and said:

"All right, my charming partner, let's have it."

"Have what?"

"Your reaction. While in his den, I gave our associate a hard jolt, but he made no comment. I think he's double-crossing us—that is, holding back. Keeping his boasted ways and means strictly to himself! While in India, he pocketed fat rewards for false testimony, so I'm entirely willing to think him a blackguard."

"My feeling exactly," she agreed in her quiet way. "And I'm sorry we're associated with him, Hugh; I'm sorry you are."

"I'm playing a game of my own," I said. "I expect something to come of it. In another day or two I'll tell you all about it, my dear—so give me the satisfaction of seeing whether my expectations come true, as I think they will."

She laughed softly. "As you like. When does Parr rejoin us?"

"I don't know yet. Chaffee wants his help, seems to trust him."

"For obvious reasons," she said. "Parr was utterly devoted to Colonel Magruder. He wants only one thing—to get the man who murdered him. And being an old soldier, he's absolutely ruthless and will stop at nothing; that's why Chaffee wants him."

I whistled softly. English girls can be smart as whips.

"You're positively clairvoyant at times!" I said.

Virginia finished her drink and rose, smiling at me.

"Probably that is why I like you, Hugh," she said, and left me to figure whether it was a compliment or not.

Aguilar, as he had promised, gave me a phone-call that evening.

"I had a letter from Washington today," he said. "Indefinite: a checkup is being made with atomic-bomb people and I'll hear in due course, and so forth. Irritating! Everyone passes the buck and is afraid of decisions. You have any luck with Chaffee?"

"Yes and no," I replied. "Our friend entered the country here at San Francisco six months ago under the name of Hari Lal—papers okay."

"Ho! That's fine—I can check on that, you bet. And that's not his name. But who can prove it?"

"So far, I don't know. But he'll have a hell of job proving it is his name! However, that's your pigeon,

not mine. I don't care about seeing him deported, nor does Chaffee. In fact, the latter wears thin on my nerves. Miss Trent and I don't fancy him, and I suspect his intents and purposes."

Aguilar cackled a thin little laugh.

"Excellent man, Clements! So do I, between you and me. I'd advise keeping Miss Trent on the sidelines; I rather think our excellent Chaffee is playing with firecrackers. I'll know more about that in a day or two."

"Oh!" I said. So he knew something. "Which Chaffee?"

"Which Chaffee?" echoed Aguilar, puzzled. "Just what do you mean?"

"Well, I may know more about it in a few days," I said. "When you feel like explaining about your firecrackers, just let me know. Good luck."

I rang off, knowing very well that he would understand perfectly. An amazing little man, this Aguilar; but he had to be reined in sharply, and I meant to do it.

That is, if my expectations came to anything. It was purely a gamble, but in view of what had happened before, I did not mind the risk.

CHAPTER TWO

THE very next day, my expectations bore rich if somewhat perilous fruit. This was extremely lucky, because Chaffee had given me a two-day limit in which to tell him where Lajpat Rai might be found. Not put as an ultimatum, of course; all the same, I felt that anything Mr. Howard Chaffee might say was to be regarded with a serious eye. As Parr had expressed it after their first meeting, the leathery-faced gentleman was a stinger; and very well put, I thought.

The situation was one of almost ludicrous irony: Virginia and I had come here to save one man from murder, and to help the law get its hands on the killer of three others. We now distrusted the one man acutely, and I was somewhat at odds with Aguilar, who stood for the law. And I, meantime, was on passable terms with the murderer, whom I hoped to bring to justice!

I left the Stanford, our quiet little hotel, for a trip downtown. I meant to get that engagement ring, today. Virginia Trent was very English in some ways—naturally—and I figured that once she was wearing the ring it would be an irrevocable step. Not that I was afraid of losing her, but it was just a play-safe detail. And, of course, there was the sentimental side.

So I mentioned that I intended to get her ball-and-chain, kissed her with due appreciation of her spirited response, and sought a downtown-bound cable car.

Downtown I hopped off the car, having the address of a big jewelry

*Illustrated by
James A. Ernst*



A well-dressed man overtook me. "Beg pardon," he said; "are you Dr. Hugh Clements?"

store, and was headed for Kearny Street when it happened: A big cheerful well-dressed man overtook me.

"Beg pardon," he said. "Are you Dr. Hugh Clements?"

"Yes," I replied in astonishment. "But how—"

"Never mind—you were pointed out to me. This is an emergency," he said. "Here's my card—Dr. James Smythe. I've been working on a former patient of yours: old chap named Chaffee. The case has me absolutely stumped. I had to give up and shoot some dope into him to keep the muscles relaxed until I could get you. Frankly, I think he's on the way out, but I understand you have used a peculiar technique that may save him. Will you come along and see him? I've a car here."

A strange thing to happen on the street of a strange city where I was unknown. But Lajpat Rai had kept me tailed, of course.

"Yes," I said. "As a physician, I can't well refuse your appeal."

"Fine!" he exclaimed, beaming. "Then hop in the car and we'll talk en route."

A car with a uniformed driver drew up at the curb, and we got in.

"This is my own car, Clements," Smythe spoke reassuringly, but still rapidly. Evidently he was not at all sure of me. "Catching you has been fast and furious work—but I must impress one thing on you: Emergency, professional secrecy, no broadcast! Savvy? We're trying to save a life—the old fellow's like. Maybe you can succeed where I failed. But we must keep silent, say nothing to anyone. You agree?"

I looked at him, and really saw him for the first time. He was earnest, sincere, rather breathless. A good man, I thought.

"Are you acting under instructions?" I asked.

He nodded.

"Yes, by phone. I don't know who gave them. At first I thought it was all screwy, until I got downtown here and you were pointed out to me—"

"Skip it," I said, and leaned back. "You're okay; for a moment I suspected you. Yes, I agree fully, if it concerns old Chaffee alone. He's not wanted for anything."

It began to come clear to me. Gerard Chaffee had gone under with one of his attacks. Lajpat Rai was unable to work on him; therefore had called in a good man—and I later found that Smythe was a very good man indeed—to handle him. An amazing thing was the rapidity and efficiency with which Lajpat Rai or his agents had acted. Smythe was unable to treat or understand the case, but realizing the emergency had pumped morphia into Chaffee to relax him and check the paralysis. Meantime I had been tailed downtown. Smythe was rushed to pick me up and haul me into the case. Desperately fast work!

A physician—a good one—reacts to the need of professional secrecy when

it is necessary to save a life. Smythe had reacted instantly; I had to follow suit, and said as much. He nodded at me.

"I was told that you'd understand, Clements. But the case isn't clear to me."

"No. I'll clear it up in a jiffy. I'm working in connection with Government men," I said, stretching things a bit, "to locate the man behind this Gerard Chaffee—the one who gave you the instructions. So I can agree, therefore, to hold the affair confidential. I'll explain the case to you."

I went on to tell how I had just returned from seven years of work in India—from long before the war, indeed—how Gerard Chaffee had been on my boat, and I had been called in when the old boy had an attack. I knew the symptoms. Chaffee had undergone torture in Tibet, being bound lengthily in certain positions which induced a later muscular and nerve paralysis. My acquaintance with such things, my experience, told me what to do and so forth.

Smythe listened to my story with interest.

"It clears," he said at last. "They must have kept you under close surveillance to be able to put the finger on you so rapidly."

"Too damned close," I agreed. "Probably foreseeing this very contingency. In fact, I foresaw the possibility myself." I said nothing to him, of course, about Howard Chaffee, brother of the invalid. "Frankly, I don't know if I can pull the old boy through, but we'll have a try. . . . What the hell! Are we going here?"

The car was pointing up the grade for the Fairhill—the old aristocratic hotel on Nob Hill.

Smythe ascended.

"Right. I'm the hotel physician. Chaffee has a room here, all alone."

This was a facer; but evidently Lajpat Rai was playing quite safe. He had put Chaffee here and was himself somewhere else—very much somewhere else. His vital interest in keeping the old fellow alive was not at all charitable. He intended to make use of him in pursuing his dream of vengeance upon Howard Chaffee; he had told me so himself.

WE were out of Smythe's car, without delay, then down a corridor and into a fine airy room where a nurse met us.

"Miss Simms, hotel nurse—Dr. Clements," Smythe snapped. "How is he?"

"Asleep. Relaxed. Heart not affected."

Old Chaffee, wrinkled and scarred and twisted, lay naked under a sheet. The drug had relaxed him, but any sedative was dangerous, purely an emergency measure; the nerve ganglia, I found, were still tight, and I said so.

"There's no cure, merely temporary relief," I told Smythe. "Your sedative has halted the paralysis; enough to stop the action would kill him. I'll work over the ganglia and loosen 'em up, and he'll sleep for a bit."

"How long does your relief last?" he queried, as I fell to work kneading and massaging the ganglia.

"Maybe a week or two, maybe less—can't say."

Between us, we gave that scarred, half-moribund old body a thorough going-over. While we were at it, the phone rang. The nurse answered and summoned me. I knew who it was even before I heard that remarkable voice with the timbre of a bronze bell.

"Hello, Dr. Clements! And how is Chaffee? Will he pull through?"

"I think so, Your Highness," I said with irony.

"I'm glad you're there. Could you consent to run over to see me, when you've finished with him, on similar conditions?"

"No. On no conditions whatever," I replied—and he laughed.

"Very well. I respect your honesty. Then I'll come and see you."

He rang off. I hung up and returned to work, giving Smythe a nod.

"Remarkable voice," he said. "I could hear it. Any call for police?"

"Unfortunately, no," I answered. "Evidence, warrants and such things are not yet in the picture."

"Too bad; I hoped for excitement. See here, if you mind if I run downstairs to my office to check on calls? Not be gone long. I'll leave Miss Simms in case you need her."

I had no objections, for he was of no great help to me. So he departed, and I worked away, in no good humor. What if Lajpat Rai did have the impudence to show up here? I could not have him arrested. There was no evidence against him to justify that extreme. Aguilar had no warrant. Certainly it was not my business to let Howard Chaffee know where his brother was, either. I must just lie doggo, and it irked me tremendously.

The job was finished at last. I stepped into the bathroom, washed my hands, and came back into the room, turning down my shirt-sleeves. My eye caught sight of the telephone on the dresser; a scratch-pad was attached to it, and a number was penciled on the pad—*Burl, 8397*. Easy to memorize.

A knock at the door, I called to enter, and the door opened to admit Lajpat Rai.

He smiled and walked in—handsome, assured, his small black mustache setting off his golden skin. One arm was under his coat, and the sleeve ended dangling.

"Good afternoon," he said, throwing a glance at the nurse, who was putting

the bed to rights. "I thought it needless to be announced. He's asleep, Clements?"

"Yes. May stay so for a while," I said. "After this, Dr. Smythe will be able to treat him. . . . Something wrong with your arm?"

"Unfortunately, yes. Useless for the time being." He smiled at me. He had stopped a bullet at Santa Barbara, after murdering Ballou, but I did not mention the matter.

"Where's Dr. Smythe's office, Miss Simms?" I asked, and when she told me: "You might run along, and tell him I'll stop in on my way out."

L AJPAT RAI made no objection, and she departed. He closed the door behind her, and turned to me.

"Really, Clements, I appreciate your being here," he said quietly, earnestly. "I fully understand all it means. But there's one thing I had to ask you. Do you consider it your duty to inform Howard Chaffee where his brother is located?"

"No," I replied. Now as always, he fascinated me. His tailored tweeds, his entire getup, was immaculate. "I don't fancy your Howard Chaffee."

"Right. He'd murder this poor old devil like a shot," said the other. "Yet you are very anxious to protect him from me."

"Not at all," I replied. "Let him do that for himself. I want only to see you brought to justice as the murderer of my friend Sir James Trent."

"Because you desire to marry his daughter," he said, showing white, even teeth in a smile. "Well, that's natural. I regret it, but can't help it. If I were melodramatic and so forth, I might threaten the young lady and bring you to your senses. I shan't do that; I've nothing against her, or against you. Indeed, I shall prove as much."

I looked at him, without response. I wondered if he could feel that in my most secret heart I almost sympathized with him. After all, he fancied that a foul wrong had been done him in the past; he had every reason to seek vengeance, according to his own warped reasoning.

"No, we have different viewpoints," he said, quite as though reading my thoughts. "A pity. Well, at a previous meeting I told you that I was wealthy, powerful, impervious to any harm from you. You must have realized that was true, Dr. Clements. You cannot even find me. So I have no intention of bribing you. But you have helped this old man, who is necessary to my plans, and I am grateful. I am leaving an evidence of my gratitude at your hotel; do not reject it—it is merely a commercial object."

He turned to the door, paused, and gave me an amused glance over his shoulder.



"Yes, he's asleep," I said. "After this Dr. Smythe will be able to treat him. ...Something wrong with your arm?"

"Your friend Mr. Aguilar," he observed, "might like to know that the papers with which I entered this country were not forged. The English consul here can no doubt obtain evidence of this fact. Good day."

He opened the door and departed. This final shot left me staring and entirely confused. What did he know, what did he guess, about Aguilar's activities? Once more I was left with the impression of his singular force; it was as though the rest of us were using pea-shooters against a man in armor.

With this sense of futility, I was slipping into my coat when Smythe knocked and stepped into the room.

"Oh! Gone, is he? Remarkable fellow, Miss Simms says. I'll have her keep an eye on the patient. Anything to suggest?"

I glanced at Chaffee. "No. He's a tough old bird and can probably prescribe for himself quite safely. I'll be getting along home."

In no mood now for buying a ring, I went back to the Stanford, inquired for Virginia, found her gone out. The clerk handed me a plain sealed envelope, and I remembered the words of Lajpat Rai. Opening it, I found a

small envelope inside, and in this something that I turned out on my palm, amazedly.

A diamond—if it were genuine—a nice-looking one of about two carats. Or some similar stone. It looked quite blue, and puzzled me. Just a commercial object, Lajpat Rai had said. An imitation stone, perhaps? With that man, anything was possible. Hm! I was not inclined to moon around the hotel all afternoon with Virginia gone. So, impulsively, I hopped a cable car and went back downtown. This was not consistent with my former mood, but a man in love is never consistent.

The gem expert tucked his glass in his eye and said "Nice stone!"

"Yes. What kind of stone?" I asked.

"That's what I want to know."

"There aren't more than three or four in the country," said he. "Blue diamond."

I had already thought about Virginia. Women are funny about engagement rings; usually they do not like any other thoughts attached to them. And this stone was from the man who had killed Sir James Trent. So I scratched the notion, bought an expensive engagement ring and turned in the blue diamond on the price.

Regaining the hotel, I found Parr sitting in the lobby, a bag between his feet. I took him up to my room, we had a drink, and talked. He liked Chaffee no more than we did, but he wanted to get the murderer of his old master, Colonel Magruder.

"What I like doesn't matter, sir! Unless you advise against it, I'll take my place with Mr. Chaffee and be doing my bit. Isn't that the likeliest way of getting a shot at this 'ere bloody Rajah from Hell?"

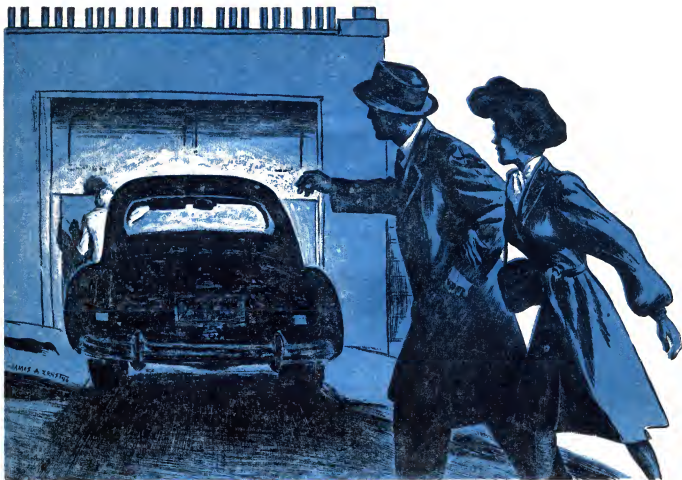
"It is," I asserted, and reaching for the phone, called Howard Chaffee's number. He answered in person and I gave my name.

"Parr's here and wants to get busy. I gathered yesterday that you want him."

"Oh, right!" said Chaffee. "Pop him in a taxi, send him here, and I'll take care of him. If he's after action, he'll get it."

"He'll be along, then. I suppose you were joking when you spoke of wanting the address of our friend from India?"

"Eh? Who—oh, come now, Clements! Pulling my leg, are you? Joking? I'd give a thousand dollars cash on the nail to know where he is!"



As he stepped into his car I had a good look at him, and thought nothing of it; then I remembered something.

"Well, his phone number is Burlingame 8397. That ought to be enough for you."

I hung up, catching Parr's eye and laughing.

"Is it really, sir?" he asked eagerly. "I'm not sure, but I think so," I said. "He's too sharp to be caught, however."

Parr was on the scent, though; his one purpose in life was to meet this Lajpat Rai in the flesh. It had become an obsession. I saw him into a taxi, sent him off to Chaffee's house, and got back to my room to find my phone ringing. My colleague Smythe was on the line.

"Clements? Good! From the way you spoke this afternoon, I imagined you'd much like to know the address of that chap—Chaffee's friend, you know. I had him tailed when he left the hotel, and I just got a report. He went to the Burlingame Arms, a hotel in Burlingame, just south of the city. He's there under the name of Senhor Arenas—supposedly he is an Argentine businessman."

I thanked him warmly, hung up, and swallowed hard. My guess had been a good one.

For a crowded moment I sat thinking. Lajpat Rai must have written down that phone number for old

Chaffee; he had been in the room with me, must have noticed or recalled it; he was too clever to miss such a detail. However—

I got Aguilar on the line. "Just on the point of calling you," he said cheerfully. "I'd like to make a deal with you, Clements. Your remarks about two Chaffees—"

"All right; it's a bargain," I said. "Come along to lunch tomorrow, and we'll talk. But here's something you may be able to use, if you work fast: Lajpat Rai is at the Burlingame Arms hotel in Burlingame under the name of Arenas—presumably an Argentine capitalist. I doubt if he'll be there long. Also, the papers under which he entered this country as Hari Lal were not forged."

"Eh? How d'ye know that?" "He told me so himself, an hour or two ago; said you might like to know."

With this parting shaft, I rang off, with the Immigration man cursing me.

or even found. I had a feeling of contempt for Howard Chaffee. With Aguilar it was different—but I could not feel sure about him.

I said something of this when I took Virginia out to dinner and a bit of dancing at one of the night-clubs on the Esplanade, the beach at the far west side of town, that evening. She nodded at me.

"I know, Hugh. How much worse do you suppose I feel—a woman, futile, doing nothing? But really, I think you're doing a lot. I'm glad you're not a beast on the hunt like our Chaffee friend; that's my impression of him."

I nodded. Having told her about Gerard Chaffee and Lajpat Rai's idea of using him against his brother, and the afternoon's events, I went into the more inviting topic of diamonds. My ring was approved, and while we were dancing I slipped it on her finger. Her protests died in admiration. We had a very pleasant evening, all in all, and got back to the hotel to find a curt note in my box. It read:

"You were right—but the bird flew the nest. —A."

Anxious to see me—so anxious that he had come to the hotel instead of waiting till the morrow! I chuckled. Aguilar was where I wanted him now;

CHAPTER THREE

I WAS not at all proud of myself nor of my actions as a phone relay man; my share in apprehending Lajpat Rai was minor. And it would be fruitless. He was not one to be so easily caught,

no more stand-off plays! And Lajpat Rai had skipped from the Burlingame Arms, as expected. So Chaffee had drawn blank also. . . .

Next day was Sunday. In the morning, Virginia and I went to church, and came back to find Aguilar on hand. We settled down in a corner of the empty lobby.

"I've made discoveries," he said in his placid way. "Overnight, the whole state of things has changed amazingly. A special warrant is on the way from Washington, and I've been given charge of the case. You'd never guess why."

"I don't intend to guess," I said cheerfully. "You come clean, Mister."

HE chuckled and burnished his spectacles.

"So you were talking with him yesterday! Clements, I'll come clean. To satisfy me, first tell me whether he has a slight scar on his upper lip."

I mentally pictured the handsome, powerful features of Lajpat Rai, and nodded.

"Yes. It's barely visible under the small black mustache, but it shows."

"That settles it; he's our man," Aguilar sighed contentedly and relaxed. "A man of a hundred identities! The one we want is Colonel Nicholas Myedin, so-called. Posing as a secret agent for China, he pulled some funny tricks on our Burmese forces at the close of the war. The specific charge is murder and theft of papers—a few weeks ago one of the officers engaged in the Bikini bomb tests was killed and his reports were taken, by Myedin. This is sacredly confidential, understand."

"And this Myedin is our Lajpat Rai?" I asked.

"Absolutely. Luckily, he thinks I'm only an Immigration inspector."

I was dazed. "Do you imply that he's a secret agent for China?"

"No, no! Of course not. A free lance. The man's an electrical wizard, Clements; he's now engaged in selling some amazing electronic devices to the Scott-Ames people of Vancouver, but he's not tied up with them. Scott, the head of the firm, is now here in the city. We've warned him and he sniffs; you know how Canadians can sniff. Like the British."

"I see. Chaffee got you into this game. Does he suspect that you—"

"That I'm a Federal agent? Nobody does," Aguilar said earnestly.

"Howard Chaffee was a dope-smuggler out of India and China. He's in with a bad crowd here—and I mean *bad*! He probably has half a dozen guns working for him right now—killers, the worst kind."

This was a new light on the leathery Chaffee. Things were opening up.

I talked—and kept nothing back. Now Lajpat Rai stood in a new light

entirely, with murder as his business; I kicked myself for my sneaking sympathy with him. He had lied like a Trojan in all he had said to me. He had not been framed at all in India; he had just been caught, whatever he might fancy about injustice.

"If I'd given you quicker information yesterday, you'd have got him," I said. "You didn't like to talk, so I didn't know the truth—"

He grinned. "Too many miss because they like to talk. I don't."

"Well, the whole situation now stands in a new and clearer light. Colonel Nicholas Myedin, eh? Then you don't care about Miss Trent's laying any charge against him in connection with her father's murder."

"I most certainly do," Aguilar said quickly. "The more charges the better. I'm not inclined to pass up any bets. He's slippery, and has a mean record."

I liked John Aguilar still more.

We decided to eat, and Virginia said she was dying to visit Fishermen's Wharf. At this, Aguilar shrugged.

"You've heard too much loose talk," said he. "It's a trap for sucker tourists who believe anything. Oh, well, there are one or two very good places there, so come on."

We took a taxicab and had an admirable fish dinner, because Aguilar knew his way around and everyone knew him. He was a contradictory fellow even in looks, never to be taken on face value.

After the meal, he left us, intent on business. Virginia and I decided to walk home; she loved long walks. My thoughts were naturally on Lajpat Rai—or Nicholas Myedin, as he had now become. A strange man, there; a free lance treading the verge of dizzy heights, strangely alone, strangely capable, holding murder a game to be played with huge zest!

Virginia and I did not discuss him. She wanted to see the city's unfamiliar places; we took little streets, all hill and dale, seeing the sort of landscapes that any city can produce in its meaner aspects.

Of course we missed our way and went far astray, which mattered nothing. We found incredible shops, crazy streets, odd corners among those steep hills. And as we climbed one short street of little apartments, mostly with garages beneath them, I saw a man putting away his car. He opened the garage doors, got into his car, and drove it in. I had a good look at him, and thought nothing of it; then as we came to the next corner, I remembered something.

His face—a kindly, aged, white-mustached face, the face of an old Hindu. The face of the old servitor of Lajpat Rai I had seen in his Los Angeles quarters weeks ago before Sir James Trent was murdered.

"Turn ' ' Back," "Virginia," "I" said. "Cross the street and turn back down—I want to get the number of a house. And what's the name of the street?"

We walked down past the garage; on the steep slope the ground floors were garages or walled, so we were below the casual sight of anyone in the house. "Thought I saw someone I knew," was my light explanation. "Evidently wrong about it." Virginia paid little attention, so I got what I wanted: 742 Colfax Street. With that address buzzing in my head, we finished our long walk.

Thinking it over, I was less sure. Perhaps mistaken recognition; perhaps merely someone who looked like the old Hindu. If that old chap were here with a car, then Lajpat Rai was here—a most unlikely and improbable thing, indeed. I was shaken, and lost confidence. Our man was a swaggering patron of great hotels and elegant hostelry, not a dweller in a hide-out in a dingy street of little flats.

So reason argued me into uncertainty; I dared take no chances on mistakes. The thing pestered me mentally all night. Go back there afoot and hang around? No, no! The whole street, except the spot immediately in front, was commanded by the house windows. I had to make sure.

VIRGINIA was to devote most of the day to a hairdresser, so I felt quite free. Midmorning saw me on Colfax Street, comfortably in the back of a taxicab. The driver halted on the hillside opposite 742, left the cab, and mounted to two different entrances in search of a mythical Horace Green who had sent in a call. He did a lot of talking and gained me quite a bit of time in which to keep an eye on 742 from my hiding-place, for I had wisely taken him into my confidence.

I saw nothing significant; that two-story apartment looked deserted, the windows remained empty, no one appeared in sight. But, when my driver returned, he settled under his wheel, started the car up the hill, and nodded at me.

"No rooms to rent around here at all," he reported. "Couldn't find out who lives in 742, neither; but I did learn the place had been sold about a week ago. That help you any?"

"Not particularly," I replied. "But if you want an extra ten-spot, come back here tonight or tomorrow, do some more gossiping, and let me have any details you can pick up about the people in 742—what they look like and so forth. Anything at all."

He said "okay," and took me back to the Stanford. I was by no means satisfied and yet not thrown off the track by what I had just learned. Rents being what they were, it was not unlikely that Lajpat Rai would

buy a place, money being no object to him. And yet my notion might be all moonshine, so I had to go slow, until I obtained something definite by way of evidence. And if I got it, I did not intend to take it to Chaffee. Aguilar was now in position to handle our man to more effect.

Chaffee phoned me that afternoon. "I keep my promises, Clements," he said. "There's a check for you in the mail, a thousand. You had the goods on the guy, but I went there with Parr too late. How did you chance on that telephone number?"

"Pure accident," I said. "I wasn't too certain about it. And I don't want your money, Chaffee—"

"Forget that stuff," he broke in. "You know that paper we found in the old book? I guess it was genuine. What you told me about my brother being alive was true—and who's behind him. A lawyer has jumped on me and it looks like I'm stuck; got to pay out big money. Well, that's all right; I'm trusting it'll lead me to

"An extra ten-spot for you: Phone Mr. Aguilar and tell him the man he wants is here. Do it fast!"

Lajpat Rai. Parr is a good man. I'm glad to have him on the job. Hey! Hold the line, will you?"

I assented, for excitement had shrilled in his voice. After a moment of waiting, I heard Chaffee again.

"Clements? Well, I've got something. Parr just came in. He's been scouting around a hotel at Burlingame—that's where your phone number sent us. And he's learned something there. He got the license number of the Rajah's car: a Buick sedan, registered in the name of Howard Smith, at an address in Yreka—"

"What town?" I demanded.

"Yreka." He spelled it out. "That's a town north of here. Fake name and address, of course; but it's a starting-point to look for here. Do you want the number?"

I took it down, with a jumpy thrill; if that car garaged at 742 Colfax Street carried this license plate 7E-21-55, then I had the answer! Chaffee vouchsafed that the number had been obtained from the hotel garage, which listed all the cars of clients. Parr, he said, had learned that the Brazilian capitalist, Arenas, had a chauffeur, name unknown, and I could guess that this was another crafty dodge of Lajpat Rai, who never had a car registered in his own name.

"How will this thing do you any good?" I demanded.

"Any traffic cop who spots this number gets a hundred bucks, Clements.



The same reward will be out in other quarters, too. You'd be surprised what a reward can accomplish! It may lead to nothing in this case, but I'm betting it will turn up something good."

There was sense in what he said, in his whole attitude. After all, he was fighting for his life. If resources had been pooled weeks ago, as I had desired, before the Rajah from Hell reached so many of his victims, a winning battle might have been waged against him—and good men might be still alive.

Excited as I was over the possibilities, I had to keep away from that Colfax Street house. One glimpse of me hanging about would blow the game, and off would be our quarry. How to make sure, then, in regard to the car and its license plate? Virginia, I, Parr, Aguilar—all of us were known by sight to Lajpat Rai, and he probably had men tailing us all. He must have a small army working for him; but now, while he had one arm out of commission, was the time to run him down, if ever.

I was expecting Virginia back about five. Slightly before then, Aguilar walked into the hotel and we adjourned to the cocktail lounge.

"Accident," said he. "I merely happened to be going past and dropped in to say hello. I suppose you know all about the legal troubles that have descended on our friend Chaffee."

"No," I said. "He mentioned something of the sort over the phone, though. He called to give me the license number on Lajpat Rai's car."

Aguilar smiled. "Yes, I got that, too, at the hotel. Happens to be a last year's plate, one of the old yellow ones. The car is undoubtedly sporting an up-to-date plate now. Parr wouldn't be up to the mark on such details of strategy."

This was a facer; it really knocked me for a loop. I tried to dissemble my feelings and asked about Chaffee's legal troubles.

These, said Aguilar, were bad. Howard Chaffee had inherited something like a hundred thousand dollars from the estate of his dead brother Gerard. Now it seemed that Gerard

was not dead at all, but was here in San Francisco and was suing for the value of the estate. And Howard Chaffee, to cover up certain frauds of his own in connection with evidence of his brother's death in Tibet, would have to settle up on the nail.

"He admitted as much," I commented. "Lajpat Rai is behind it, of course. He regards Chaffee with venomous hatred, and I don't blame him. But tell me—how the devil do you know so much detail?"

Aguilar accepted a cigarette. "My boy, we're dealing with a smart man, one of the most clever fellows alive, in Colonel Nicholas Myedin. But let me tell you that no one, whether Al Capone or a Rajah from Hell, is smart and wealthy and powerful enough to thumb his nose at Uncle Sam's law-enforcement agencies. We're dealing with a crook, a scoundrel, a murderer. No guy like that is clever enough to beat it—in the end. Cleverness won't help him—it'd take an act of God."

I had my doubts, despite everything. Lajpat Rai, or Myedin, was a shadow, a myth. Trace him through Gerard Chaffee? Aguilar merely sniffed. Try everything, he said, neglect nothing, fail at every move—but sooner or later, the end would come. Maybe through Howard Chaffee, too. Another reason to give Chaffee rope, let him play his own game. . . .

Now Virginia arrived, interrupting us. Aguilar stayed for another drink, refused dinner, and left us. After Virginia had changed her dress, we took a cab downtown to the Palace for a sensible old-fashioned dinner at the Garden Court—a regular London atmosphere, and excellent wine. Subdued lights, soft music, perfect service combined to make it a memorable occasion.

We were halfway through the meal, when Virginia gave me a startled glance.

"I'm not sure—or yes, I am too," she exclaimed. "Do you remember the man I saw in a drugstore at Santa Barbara, just for a moment?"

I caught my breath, as I met her eyes.

"You don't mean— No, it can't be—not here, of all places!"

"Yes. To your left and behind you; the table against the wall."

I turned a little, and saw him, slim and debonair in his evening attire, the jeweled miniature of some decoration flashing on his shirt-front—Colonel Nicholas Myedin, as he actually was—Lajpat Rai, as I knew him.

CHAPTER FOUR

A GLIMPSE—I dared no more, and turned to Virginia, breathless. "Yes, that's the man! His empty sleeve is proof enough."

"Oh! That's what puzzled me; he seemed one-armed."

Her eyes flashed; I knew she was thinking of her father's murder.

"Careful, my dear," I warned. "He has seen you; therefore he knows we're here. He's no fool. Who is that with him?"

"I don't know him: a white man," she said. "Well, do something!"

"Whatever you say." I looked at her. "What?"

At this, she bit her lip. "I'm a fool, Hugh: there's nothing we can do."

"Yes, there is, but don't get hasty," I said. "If he hasn't noticed you already, he will. He wouldn't be here unless he were perfectly safe, be sure of that. The only person I know who can tag him down for keeps is Aguilar, who has a warrant for him. Making a scene or calling in the house detectives would be just so much old horse. Neither you nor I can go find a phone without attracting his direct attention; and he'd guess what for."

"Then what?" she said. "Call our waiter, or the head-waiter, either one you see." While speaking, I wrote on the wine-list Aguilar's name and telephone number.

Presently our waiter came and hovered above her. Virginia handed him the list, and I did the talking.

"An extra ten-spot for you if you'll make this call: Get Mr. Aguilar and tell him to come here immediately, that the man he wants is here. I am Dr. Clements. Do it fast."

No questions, no repetitions; the waiter was intelligent. He just bowed and went away.

A diamond or similar stone—it puzzled me. Just a commercial object, Lajpat Rai had said.

I smiled at Virginia. "Now calm down. Have a cigarette; don't watch him. It's a grand play if it wins, so don't spoil it."

She nodded and lit a cigarette at the match I held. I could have sworn she never again looked at that other table, yet all the while she was watching it from the corner of her eye, and reported to me. They had ordered; they were having cocktails. A wine-bucket was brought and set at one side.

Our waiter came back. Smart man! With him he brought the *sommelier*, as a plausible excuse for his errand, who displayed a bottle of wine to me and talked it up. I nodded and it was opened. The waiter brushed my sleeve as he leaned forward, with a glass.

"He'll be here immediately, sir," he said softly. The job was done.

FIVE minutes passed. When Aguilar would get here I had no idea. Virginia was looking past me, while apparently absorbed in conversation. She reached for the ash-tray and spoke softly.

He's showing something to the other man; it looks like a little clock in a case, but it's not a clock. He's turning things and explaining it. Not a radio either; too small for that. Now he has put it on the table and is turning a dial, apparently. Perhaps it is a radio. He's moving it closer and saying something—

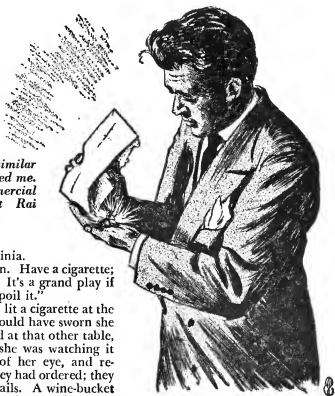
Her eyes widened on me. She heard it too! A curiously quiet voice came from beside me, though no one was there. It was the voice of Lajpat Rai, like the lingering note of a bronze bell.

"Good evening, Miss Trent—Dr. Clements. This is a pleasant surprise."

A gasp escaped Virginia. "Hugh! It can't be! That table is thirty feet away! It's not real—"

"It is quite real." Lajpat Rai laughed softly. "We are talking, and no one else can hear. What do you think, Clements? Magic?"

"Hardly that," I said, not loudly. Turning, I looked at him. "If it's not





When I saw the number upon it, I think my heart stood still for an instant—Lajpat Rai's old number!

some trick—some walkie-talkie or electronic development—”

“Right!” said he. “Trust your shrewd, practical brain to hit the mark! Yes, a new thing in electronics and sensory vibration. In a year or so you’ll see it on the market, I believe.”

Lajpat, or Myedin, reached forward and touched the glinting thing like a clock that stood before him. He was laughing at his companion, whose back was to us. There was no more voice. I turned back and met the startled gaze of Virginia Trent.

“Nobody else heard,” she murmured. “No one is looking, no attention was attracted! Hugh, is it real?”

“I expect it is, my dear,” I replied, and reaching over, touched her cold hand. “A bit of showing off, no doubt for his companion. Yes, give him due credit; he’s a past master at electronics and such things.”

“He’s getting up,” she said. “Putting the clock in his coat pocket—”

“Are they leaving?” I asked quickly.

“No. At least, the other man isn’t; apparently he’s just going out for something. He’s asking the head-waiter something—now he’s going out—he’s gone.” Her eyes came back to me. “What a handsome man; there’s a fascination about him—terrible!”

She was badly wrought up. I glanced around. The other man sat at the table, smoking unconcernedly, evidently awaiting his companion’s return.

“Good,” I said, relieved. “Colonel Nicholas Myedin has been having a bit

of fun, for which he’ll pay presently. Let me fill your glass, my dear; the wine is good.”

She nodded. I refilled our glasses. We clicked them across the table and she responded faintly to my smile. Our waiter came, replaced the bottle in its cooler, brought up another chair and laid the place.

“He said he was coming at once, sir,” he said softly. “Mr. Aguilar, I mean.”

I nodded to him. “Well, Virginia, we have him trapped. It’ll be interesting to see how our friend Aguilar goes to work. That double-action walkie-talkie thing will be an entertaining and valuable capture, too.”

“Strange that he was so open about it,” she said, frowning slightly. “Almost a defiance. I don’t like it, Hugh; I wish he hadn’t gone out! I wish we had stopped him.”

“How?” I rejoined. “Short of brute force, I don’t see how. Here comes Aguilar now. Any sign of Lajpat returning?”

Her gaze swept the room behind me. “No.”

AGUILAR arrived, wearing a tuxedo; his shirt was not fresh; he looked as usual, mussed and off trim. He spoke to Virginia, shook hands with me. The waiter drew back his chair and he seated himself placidly.

“A surprising summons, Clements, but I think I made good time,” he said in his mild way. “Outside and in here are now nine agents in all; every exit is watched too. Now, if you’ll— Ah!”

He broke off, looking past me. I glanced around. Myedin’s companion had risen and was walking past—a chunky, efficient-looking man, a stranger to me.

“Interesting fellow,” Aguilar said. “He’s the French consul here in the city, an important man. Why, what’s wrong?”

“Our faces must have appraised him, as the appalling realization took us. The French consul! Myedin had been dining with him, entertaining him with that electronic gadget—and had skipped out to escape the net. I knew it with ghastly certainty.

“French?” repeated Virginia. “You mean that he—that Myedin is tied up with the French consul?”

“Lord, no! Probably making use of him,” snapped Aguilar. “But where is he?”

“Dining with the man who just passed,” I said. “Or was. He’s gone now.”

Between us, we acquainted Aguilar with the situation. My worst fears were too obviously true; the table where Myedin had sat was now being cleared, he was gone. In the very instant of victory we had lost our man. He had slipped away before our faces. Like a clever magician, he had bemused us with that toy of his—then vanished.

However, in this hard moment I had to admire Aguilar. He never turned a hair.

“Too bad, but you did well, Clements,” he said quietly. “We’re just not good enough. Next time we must do

better. I can't touch that consul, of course; diplomats are inviolate, and Myedin has just made use of him."

"He had no reason to skip out," I protested. "It was mere chance that we came."

"But he saw you and took warning." Aguilar sipped his wine, then leaned over and patted Virginia's hand. "Sorry, my dear; however, I've some interesting news for you. Wait till I dismiss my men."

He lifted a hand. Two dark-clad men came from the foyer and to our table. Aguilar looked up at them.

"I was too slow, boys," he said, with unwarranted self-blame. "Send everyone away and hope for better luck next time. It's a miss."

THE two men went away. Aguilar hauled some papers from his pocket and produced an amazingly poor photograph or snapshot of three men in whites. He showed it to Virginia. "Can you recognize any of these?"

"Of course. The one in the center—he has a mustache now, but he's Lajpat Rai. At least, Dr. Clements says he is. He's the man who was recently here."

Aguilar turned to me and shoved over the picture.

"That's your man, yes," I said. "What's all this about?"

"Business," said he. "Miss Trent, when your father was—er—murdered, the actual criminal was killed. He has since been identified. He was formerly a personal servant to Lajpat Rai, also to Colonel Nicholas Myedin. Tomorrow morning I'm going to ask that you sign the complaint charging Myedin with being accessory to your father's murder. Eh?"

"Of course," she responded. "That's what I've wanted to do, but you lacked any evidence."

"I think there's enough now, with what Dr. Clements can give us, to support the charge," he said. "We don't need it, perhaps, but I like to neglect nothing."

"A dozen warrants won't help you arrest Myedin unless you can find him," I said.

"True," assented Aguilar. "Too true, in fact. Tonight is an example. He laughs at us; but the last laugh is what counts most. Well, I'll come around to your hotel in the morning, if I may, and run you down to police headquarters to get the papers duly signed and so forth."

He departed. Virginia lit a cigarette and eyed me uneasily.

"I don't like it," she said, "any of it! That man isn't my notion of a proper bulldog on the trail. He's not brisk and threatening. Then there's Lajpat Rai or Myedin or whatever his name is. Why, he seemed positively frivolous. Huh! I don't understand it at all!"

I smiled. "You've been reading detective stories, my dear. If I work all day in the lab with a microscope and blood-specimens, I don't come home at night spotted all over with gore, you know."

"That's not the same," she said.

"Precisely the same. Colonel Nicholas Myedin, bless him, has blood on his hands an inch thick, but he keeps them outwardly clean."

That must have made her think of her father. She shivered slightly, and gathered up her coat. I called for the check, and we rose. The evening had been spoiled for us; everything had gone wrong.

Still, I wondered. Lajpat Rai never took chances without a reason. Granted that the encounter with us had been unexpected, why had he appeared here with the French consul? What considered calculation lay behind it? The thought worried me. I knew the gentleman far too well to doubt there was much chance at work—except our presence. He had shown off his electronic trick with set purpose, he had dined publicly with the French consul from set purpose, and there was nothing frivolous about it either. The more I reflected on it, the more convinced I was of this fact, and it loomed with sinister force. No man deliberately risks life and liberty for a petty gain.

One pleasing thing about our little hotel was that it had the right idea about service. The morning paper, for instance, was always pushed under the door at an early hour. I awakened next morning in good time, obtained the news sheet, and hopped back into bed to read luxuriously. Later in the morning Aguilar would come for Virginia, and I would go along with them; probably much later. No use worrying over that until the time came.

The news held nothing disquieting. I remember. International affairs were not so bad; following the Bikini bomb test of July past, things had quieted down a good deal. United States and Soviet relations were on the whole doing all right, although the usual pinpricks showed a bit of tension. I glanced at a headline "Three Men Shot" and paid no attention, until suddenly the thing rose out of the printed page and hit me like a blow in the face, as I read the sub-head over the story:

THREE MEN SHOT MYSTERY BATTLE SHOSKES FAIRVIEW STREET

Three men were killed at 9:30 last night in what is believed to have been an echo of Indian feuds. James Parr, caretaker of the premises at 795 Fairview Street, was shot to death and two visitors, Irwan Dhas of Bombay and an elderly man named Gerard

Chaffee were the victims of the shooting. No witnesses of the affray remained to tell what took place. It was possibly a tragedy of errors, since the premises are occupied by Howard Chaffee, a brother of the dead man, who last evening was out of the city...

Incredulity seized upon me as I read. Parr, good old Scotty Parr, dead! It seemed impossible. And old Chaffee, my patient—why, he was assuredly no gunman; he could barely walk, much less go in for killings! But there it was, in cold print. The story went on to play up the mystery. Neighbors had been aroused by a sudden fusillade of shots from the house, before which a car stood at the curb—a car belonging, it was later ascertained, to Irwan Dhas. What took place, no one knew. Parr had been alone in the house, presumably. It was known that he had recently come from India. Howard Chaffee could not be reached at the time of going to press.

I looked back again at the beginning of the news item. Nine-thirty! That was precisely when Colonel Nicholas Myedin had been going through his electronic antics last evening. So my wondering was answered.

He had prepared a very careful, foolproof alibi. It explained everything, except the meaning of what had happened.

CHAPTER FIVE

I BATHED, shaved, breakfasted, and I was still eating eggs and bacon when Aguilar arrived. He joined me in the hotel coffee-shop, sat down with a nod, and ordered coffee.

"Myedin picked himself a good alibi last night, eh?"

"Obviously. So you've seen the story."

"Seen it?" He permitted himself a snort. "I've been working on it since four this morning, when one of my men picked it up. Within the past hour everything has been straightened out smooth as silk. Our man is a great detail worker."

"Glad you're informed," I said. "I don't see how, or why, Parr shot those two men—old Chaffee and the strange Hindu."

"He didn't," said Aguilar. "Must have been three or four gunmen on hand. They all opened up at once, boggled things a bit, and the Hindu got a crack at Parr and killed him. That, I imagine, is what actually happened; no one knows certainly. For lagniappe, as they used to say in New Orleans, there's the odd way the Hindu was dressed: in evening clothes."

I made no comment, and Aguilar related what had happened, as he figured it.

A trap, obviously. Howard Chaffee, who must have handed out a fat lot of money at his brother's orders, had arranged for a visit from Gerard and Lajpat Rai. The trap set, he skipped out to San José for the night. The visitors had come, with Irwan Dhas playing the part of the Rajah from Hell. Parr had admitted them into the house and the hidden killers had blasted them. Chaffee had got rid of his poor old brother, anyhow.

"I've investigated Myedin's connection with the French consul," Aguilar stated. "He's been selling to French interests certain electronic inventions for use with hydro-electric equipment—apparently quite legitimate. Old Gerard Chaffee left a will leaving everything he owned to the French consul here, too. Consulate lawyers have produced the will and established the claim."

"Behind that false front, Myedin collars the money?" I said.

Aguilar nodded.

"Right. All legitimate enough, of course. The man's infernally clever."

"Has Howard Chaffee come back to town?"

"Oh, sure. He's being grilled, but there's nothing on him to prove he laid any trap, of course. He remains blandly innocent."

"And can't you make any arrest?"

"No. We've no reason to touch the French interests, of course. Howard Chaffee thinks himself smart; he's a fool. Myedin will make some deal, probably killing him, and depart at will for fresh pastures. He's made a fat haul out of Gerard Chaffee."

"And you can't touch him?"

"Yes, if I could find him." Aguilar smiled and rubbed up his glasses. "That's my problem—finding him! I do not seek a battle of wits. My sole aim is to pounce on him, and if he resists arrests, to shoot."

"Simple." I commented ironically. Poor old Chaffee from Tibet! He had been no more than a pawn. He had deserved a better fate.

"Do you think Miss Trent is ready to go?" Aguilar asked. "We'd best get off."

"I don't know," I said discourteously. "Look her up yourself."

HE left to do so; I paid the check and stepped outside for a breath of fresh air, feeling morose and shocked. Parr's death left me much disturbed, too. In passing the desk, I took an envelope that was shoved at me by my mail. After a few moments I opened it.

The sole contents was a check for a thousand dollars, signed by Howard Chaffee—the money he had said was in the mail. I stood there in the sunlight, staring at it, then abruptly tore it into scraps and stepped over to the gutter, throwing away the pieces. I

wanted none of his money. It was no less than an insult.

"Hey, there! Hey, Mister!" said a voice. "It's me!"

I glanced around. A taxi had drawn up at the curb almost beside me. There was a face I recognized, grinning at me. With a rush, I remembered the taxi-man I had sent to pick up anything he could at the Colsax Street house. He had slipped clear out of my mind with the rush of events.

"Oh, hello!" I said, and opening the cab door, got in. "Stick around; we'll be needing you in a few minutes. Get anything on that house?"

"Yeah, but I been sick," he replied. "I sent a couple kids around there to scout. They done a good job. Only person they seen was an old guy, dark-complexioned, like a Mexican, with white mustache."

I nodded. The same man I had seen.

"Buick sedan in the garage," he went on.

I caught at the name, Lajpat Rai had used a Buick at Burlingame.

"Did they see the license number?"

"Yeah; California, but they didn't get the number—just kids, you know." He spoke apologetically. "Got something else they hauled out of a trash-barrel back of the house last night. Don't know if it means anything to you or not. It's a last year's plate, of course, orange and black instead of black and white—"

He lunged forth into sight a bent, bedraggled old license plate. When I saw the orange number upon it, I think my heart stood still for an instant. The number was 7E-24-55; the number of Lajpat Rai's car at the Burlingame Arms. The car had returned to this house on Colsax Street, the old plates had been stripped off and replaced by new ones—and this was one of the old plates from a trash-barrel!

That house was the secret hideaway of Nicholas Myedin!

I fumbled some money into his hand, seized the plate and shoved it under my coat, and got into the hotel; I did not feel safe until I had reached my room and put the thing out of sight. Then I came back down and met Virginia and Aguilar, and put them into the taxicab. I begged off going along; I was not needed, and did need to sit down and think what I was to do.

It was not so easy. The obvious thing, of course, was to advise Aguilar at once and let him fall to work. To be honest, I was afraid of failure, I think. Last night's affair had unsettled me; I could picture Myedin again scenting a trap and taking to flight. I was unsure of Aguilar, and too bitterly sure of the Rajah from Hell.

Yet what else could I do? Alone, nothing whatever. I sat in my room,

shaking with buck fever, unable to determine on anything. I had the positive certainty now: Our man was in that house. Gradually the conviction came to me that there was only one thing to do—put my information in Aguilar's hands and let him act upon it. This was sensible, and calmed me to realize it. Thought of Parr did urge me to tell Chaffee and let him put his gunmen to work, but this would be folly and I knew it.

MY room phone rang. I picked up the receiver to hear Chaffee's voice.

"Clements? I'm down here in the bar. Can you come down? Can't stop five minutes."

"Right down," I said, and suited action to words.

I found him seated at a drink, and the sight of him was a shock. He looked ten years older, shaken, nervous.

"You've seen the papers? I've had a hell of a time with the cops and all," he snarled. "On my way home now. Just stopped in for a minute. I don't suppose you know anything—bad business last night, all of it. Well, I've had my notice."

His manner, his snarling whine, put me off any thought of confiding in him.

"Your notice? What d'you mean?" I inquired.

"Telegram, unsigned. Said all accounts would be settled inside two days," he responded jerkily. "You know what that means—same as the others. I've got to use my head now; I'm going to let that bastard come after me, and then get him for keeps. By the way, I'm sorry about Parr."

"So am I," was my reply.

That was all. He had left his car outside, and I went out to it with him.

"So long," he said. "Don't count me out yet; I'm going to get him. If you pick up anything, let me know."

I merely nodded, and he drove off. I did feel a little guilty for letting him go and saying nothing—but it was the only wise course. Aguilar was the only man to trust.

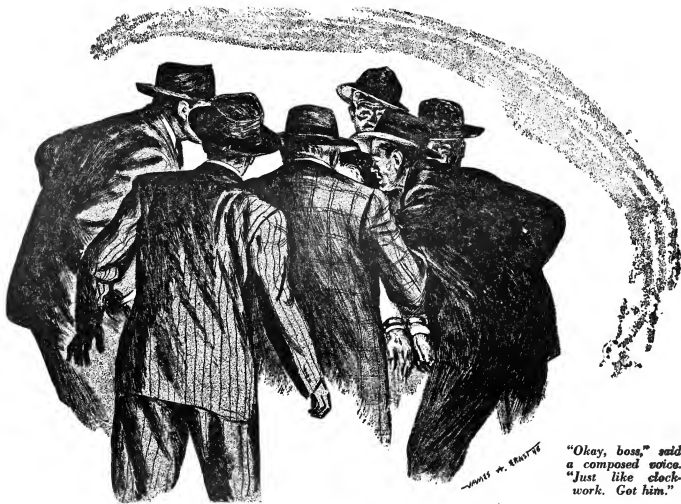
I had to pay in worry for my indecision, however. Virginia came home alone; Aguilar had been detained on some business, she said. She had learned all about last night's affair, too, and it had put her into a dither of nervousness.

I was even worse off, for I tried everywhere to get hold of Aguilar, and could not. It was three in the afternoon before he telephoned.

"You'd better get here on the jump," I said.

"No can do," he rejoined. "I've an important meeting—"

"Listen," I broke in. "I've got everything you want—everything, understand? I haven't told even Vir-



"Okay, boss," said a composed voice. "Just like clock-work. Got him."

ginia. I'm the only soul who knows, and I won't talk over the wire. But this is the wind-up if you don't bungle it."

"Oh!" he said slowly. "All right, then. I'll be there in ten minutes."

Three minutes later my phone rang again. I answered.

"Hi, Clements. This is Chaffee. Free this evening?"

"Unfortunately, no," I answered. "But why?"

"I thought you might like to sit in on a party with me," he said. "Looks as if it would clean up this business of ours at one crack. Get me?"

"Oh!" I thought fast. "You mean you've found the fellow?"

"No. I've got him coming to me. I got a line on him and I'm using it."

"Sorry," I rejoined, in relief. The game was still mine, and I wanted none of his traps. "I'm definitely tied up, tempting as you make it sound."

"Okay—your loss," he responded, and hung up in an evident huff.

I was not worried about his reaction, but wiped my brow; for an instant he had started me sweating, with the suspicion that he had discovered about the Colsax Street house. So he had got a line on Colonel Nicholas and had laid another trap? Evidently he had not learned his lesson the first time, I reflected. A bungler; and I

had been so tempted to reveal my precious secret to such a rogue!

Virginia heard nothing of the secret. Not that I distrusted her, of course; I distrusted fate. When Aguilar arrived, he came directly to my room. I let him in and pointed to a chair. He settled into it.

"Very odd thing, if you spoke the truth over the phone," he said. "Chaffee had a notion to end the game to-night, too. I was with him when I called you."

"Howard Chaffee?" I stared at him. He nodded, calm and unexcited.

"Right. He's been lucky in a way. Remember the fellow killed last night in company with Gerard Chaffee—Irwan Dhas? Well, Chaffee found he had a brother working in a store on Dupont Street and thinks it's a direct lead to Colonel Nicholas Myedin; so he's given the fellow a message to deliver. Of course, the man swears he never heard of Lajpat Rai and so forth; I think myself he lies, and the message will be delivered. Chaffee wanted me in on it; I refused."

"Does Chaffee know you for what you are?"

He shook his head, smiling slightly. "No. I think he suspects something, though, from my pull with the cops. He's probably heard of the FBI and such organizations."

"But I don't savvy it, Aguilar! What kind of a message to our man?"

"A damn' fool one. Precisely what Myedin will most like to hear. Chaffee is the bait; he'll be waiting in a car marked with a blue tail-light at nine tonight, on the outer Esplanade drive opposite McGinty's Café. Fine deserted sea-coast at that spot. He wants Lajpat to meet him and call everything off—offers big money and so forth."

"Still I don't get it. Will he really be in the car?"

"Absolutely. He figures he's being closely watched and Lajpat will come to finish him. But he has or will have men hidden, marksmen. He gambles his life on their ability to act first."

"Damned nonsense!" I exclaimed. "It's no more than a childish variant of the trap he set last night—brave, if you like, but silly."

Aguilar nodded. "So I tried to argue. But that's Chaffee himself—courageous, perfectly willing to gamble his life, but nervous and shaken, unstable, at extremes. Did you get me here to receive news, or to talk my head off?"

"Oh! Excuse me," I said quickly. "The point is, Chaffee called me and offered to let me in on the party, just after you had left him."

"He talks too much." Aguilar made a nervous gesture. "I think Myedin



Tumult, darkness, men stumbling into one another—then, suddenly a frightening burst of red flame erupted in our faces.

will copper him tonight, somehow. That fellow smells a trap afar off. I'd not want to be in Chaffee's boots at nine tonight."

He sat looking at me. A muscle twitched in his cheek; he was actually nervous as hell and trying to keep it hidden. I smiled at him.

"Oh, you want information! Very well. The Rajah from Hell is living at 742 Colfax Street, apparently with only one servant."

Aguilar blinked. "Guesswork?" he said.

I reached out the license plate. "This is real, solid fact. Finger it. I'll tell you the whole thing, and you can draw your own conclusions."

So, unhurriedly, I began with the car at the Burlingame Arms, told how my attention had fallen upon the Colfax Street house, and what had happened since. Through it all, John Aguilar listened in utter silence, eyes fastened upon me, until I had finished. He looked blank, emotionless, stony.

"I see," he said at last. "You've been careful. Good work, Dr. Clements. Very pretty work indeed." He stirred and rose. "I must be off."

"Eh?" I said, surprised. "Off? Where?"

"To find a taxicab and have a look at that house myself, now, in the full light of day. Our man's there, no doubt of that. We'll smoke him out tonight—unless Chaffee gets him first. We'll do it, in fact, while Chaffee is springing his little silly trap."

CHAPTER SIX

AGUILAR got his look around, which of course showed him only a blank house. To my surprise, however, he showed up with a city survey of the district, showing everything in and about each lot.

He advised saying nothing to Virginia, and I agreed. She would necessarily have worried keenly. Besides, he wanted to keep the facts known only to the two of us; like me, he feared lest the Rajah from Hell could pick secrets from out of the very air. And he could just about do that with his electronic apparatus, too.

Aguilar showed up for dinner with us at the hotel. I told Virginia I was going out with him later to hold a conference upon the whole business, and she asked no questions. In fact, we left immediately after dinner; Aguilar

had a car, and drove downtown on Post Street to a bungalow that served him for living-quarters and office. He had a bare, homeless sort of place there. His office had nothing in it except a big city map on the wall, an ancient roll-top desk, three telephones and a couple of chairs.

"Well, it's seven-thirty—loads of time." Aguilar took a creaky chair at the desk and began to load a pipe. Before he had it lighted, the phones began to ring; he got five calls within two minutes. To each one he replied just three words:

"Nine o'clock. Okay."

He hung up finally and grinned at me. "Military dispositions, Clements. This time, no mistake; everything covered. Even so, I expect he'll spring something on us at the last minute; maybe he'll vanish into thin air."

A sour jest—too apt to come true.

"Nine o'clock?" I said. "That's precisely when Chaffee has set his trap. Aren't you going to stop that foolishness?"

"No. It's very opportune for us," said Aguilar, smoking comfortably. "It's a long way from that house over to the Esplanade; gives us plenty of time to operate."

"Suppose the trap works and Chaffee kills him?"

He shrugged. "I'll not mind. I've given up all hope of catching him alive."

"And if Chaffee is killed?"

"No particular loss, as I look at it," he returned calmly. "Might even be a distinct gain. Anyhow, the thing distracts our man's attention."

"If he goes himself," I added. "He may not."

"We'll know before we leave here," said Aguilar. I gave him a sharp inquiring glance but he vouchsafed no information. Apparently he wanted to divulge none of his preparations, and I blamed him not a bit.

IT was a dismal hour that we put in, so far as I was concerned. We smoked, talked, got occasional phone reports. Eight-thirty came. Aguilar rose, opened a closet, and came out with a long walkie-talkie outfit. I helped him get it on his back.

"Expect to use this thing—in a city?" I demanded.

"The Signal Corps has developed it for that express purpose, my skeptical friend. We're going to fight the Rajah from Hell with his own weapons— Ah!"

A buzz; he made answer, listened, stood there smiling, and cut off.

"We'd better go, Clements. The Buick sedan is just leaving the Colfax Street garage now," he said. "Two men in it—Myedin himself is on the job. And for the first time, he's made a mistake, a serious one. Never mind; you'll see when we get there. My car has a driver; come along. You have a gun?"

I nodded, and we left the bungalow. Outside, a driver was in his car. We got in and the car started. Aguilar had to sit hunched over because of the walkie-talkie; from time to time, he got reports. To Colfax Street was only a short distance. When we turned into it, we drove past the house without stopping. The garage doors were closed. A floodlight at the top of the steps illumined them brightly; no one could approach the house from the street below without being distinctly visible.

"That's his mistake," said Aguilar softly. Our car stopped at the curb slightly up the street and opposite. "Plenty of light there—none in back! And it's possible to get at the house from the rear. Keep your eye on the place, now; we're running on schedule."

I looked, and saw not a soul in the street, though down the block two or three cars stood at the curb. A small car came toiling up the hill and stopped before 742. A man got out and started up the stairs that climbed to the house. In that floodlight every detail was visible. He wore a tele-

graph messenger's uniform and cap. A telegram for Colonel Nicholas Myedin, no doubt. He was all alone. No one else was in his car.

It was close to nine o'clock, almost upon the hour, in fact.

I watched those lighted steps, and saw no one. The house entrance itself was of course invisible from the street. Suddenly there came a buzz from Aguilar's contraption; he answered, listened, then spoke.

"Okay. . . . Here, Clements! Help me off with this thing."

In the confined space, it was a job getting the straps unbuckled and off. As he got clear, he told me:

"As we expected: Chaffee's parked car was just smashed to flinders by another car. Not the Buick, of course; Myedin was too smart for that—probably had another car all set for the job. No details yet, of course. Well, that finishes Chaffee; now we'll have to step on it. All right, Charley; come along with us."

The driver hopped out as we left the car, and I caught the bulge of a holster at his belt. Aguilar led the way, and as we crossed the street, the figure of the messenger came down the lighted steps, fast, got into his car and shoved off. We were going up those lighted steps almost before he was gone.

So Howard Chaffee was probably done for! Twice he had set a trap and caught the wrong prey. Well, he had been warned. I had no doubt that he was dead; when Lajpat Rai struck, he did not waste his blows. And what were we walking into, here in this blaze of light where anybody up above could see us clearly? Perhaps Aguilar suspected my hesitation.

"Step fast, Clements!" he said. "If the messenger got anyone in the house to answer the door, it's all right. If not, it isn't."

Our chauffeur dashed ahead of us, a flashlight in his hand. We were at the top, and out of the floodlight. Ahead was darkness and movement, and the stabbing beam of the flashlight.

"Okay, boss," said a composed voice. "Just like clockwork. Got him."

Understanding broke upon me: The messenger was a decoy. Here under the ray of light was Lajpat Rai's servant, the gentle, kindly old man whom I knew by sight. He was now handcuffed and between two other men who held him. They had come in from the rear, to the house.

"Good work," Aguilar said. "Inside with him somewhere, out of the way. Tie him in a chair and gag him. Make sure that he touches nothing. Charley, take a look through the house. Careful not to touch anything."

He had a small flashlight and signaled with it, as the others moved into

the house, which was all dark. I caught two answering stabs of light from the bushes around; more men were stationed there. The little entrance porch where we stood was in inky darkness.

"I think, Doctor," said Aguilar, "we'd better stop right here. Catch him in the entrance; a flashlight is always very startling. He may double back for the street, and then my men down below will have him trapped on the stairs."

"Him? There'll be another man with him," I said. "Two men left here."

"Yes, of course. I wonder why? Must be a reason," he said musingly. "Well, we'd better shut up. He's a bit overdue now. We'll have warning when he comes into the garage; we can hear the doors."

We waited a long while; everything was black, everything was still. A dog in the adjoining yard began to bark, but roused no response and desisted. Deceptive as the minutes were, I knew they were flitting steadily away. To get here from the Esplanade, with a good driver, should take no more than ten minutes, with luck. Much more than that had elapsed since the report of the crash had come in on the walkie-talkie.

The porch on which we stood was only a step above the ground and was surrounded by a low half-rail a couple of feet high. The house door was standing wide open. I caught a brief ray of light in the hall and heard a footstep. The light struck us and vanished.

"It's me," said the voice of our driver, Charley, who was undoubtedly one of Aguilar's men. He spoke under his breath, cautiously: "House is empty. Lot of scientific apparatus in one room. One of the upper rooms projects and has a full view of the street below, and the steps up, in that blaze of light."

"Scram," said Aguilar. "And quick about it."

As he spoke, I heard a car door slam, and the sound prickled in every nerve. Charley disappeared silently. I listened for the scuff of feet on the cement steps, but could hear nothing. Then, causing a distinct shock that was almost panic, an electric light over our heads flashed on, bathing the entrance in light.

I met the staring, startled gaze of Aguilar. I must have looked still more wide-eyed, for a shadowy smile came to his lips. He pointed down, and I understood. Someone in the garage, below, must have turned a switch. It was as simple as that. Colonel Nicholas Myedin had come home, and the trap was sprung.

No doing anything about it, of course. I questioned Aguilar with a

look, and he shrugged. After all, it did not matter. If Myedin got this far, he was caught, and the light would merely prevent any attempt at escape. So, producing a cigarette, I lighted it and we waited. Now we could hear the sound of footsteps. Aguilar quietly stepped to the house door and pulled it nearly shut. Everything was strangely prosaic. Our anticipations had been absurd; there was no flourish of pistols, nothing melodramatic—just a man walking into the trap.

It seemed almost a pity, I thought, that the Rajah from Hell should end up in so tame and unglamorous a fashion. For he had no earthly chance of evasion or escape. Men inside the house, around it, men down below closing in upon him—

The footsteps were closer now. A voice was murmuring low words; I caught the metallic timbre of the voice I knew so well. A figure moved at the edge of the light. I flipped away my cigarette; no further need now of any concealment. Then I stood petrified, as the approaching figure came into the light with a sudden cry and a quick step forward.

"Oh, Hugh! He—he said you'd be here—"

It was Virginia Trent.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THERE was an instant of stupefied silence.

I stared past Virginia, as I folded an arm about her, and saw Lajpat Rai standing there, within the circle of light. His guard was down; he looked utterly astounded as he regarded us. Virginia was speaking rapidly.

"He said you were here, that you wanted me; I thought it was a lie, but I couldn't refuse to come—he was very polite—"

Lajpat Rai broke into a laugh, and stepped forward.

"A delicious irony," he said. "Yes, I did say you were here; I meant to get you later, Clements, and somehow arrange with both of you an end to hostilities. And here you are! Evidently I was right in suspecting that your continued enmity would be perilous. I disregarded you too long."

But before I could speak, Aguilar stepped out.

"Here you're not dealing with Dr. Clements, but with me. Colonel Nicholas Myedin, I have a warrant in my pocket. You're under arrest for murder; I counsel you to make no attempt to escape. I have men covering you this moment."

"Indeed! Mr. Aguilar, I believe." Myedin surveyed him with arrogance, seemed about to go on speaking, then checked himself abruptly. Pride, perhaps, or vanity. His trim figure, with one sleeve dangling, looked grotesque.

"Your hand, please," Aguilar commanded. I saw that he held a pair of handcuffs. Myedin saw it also, and started slightly.

"No," he said, a flat statement, a positive refusal. "You should add kidnapping charges to your fantastic list. Or don't you suppose I kidnaped Miss Trent?"

"Oh, don't be silly!" broke out Virginia. "He didn't at all, really. I came quite voluntarily; everything was very pleasant!"

Myedin bowed to her. "Thank you, Miss Trent. May I suggest that things might be more comfortable all around if we stepped into the house?"

"No!" I exclaimed sharply. All eyes went to me. "Careful, Aguilar! He's an expert illusionist. You've forgotten one important thing: two men left this house—where's the other one?"

I had hit the mark; Myedin's face told me as much. Then he stepped forward past us to the doorway and paused, turning.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "These charges are fantastic. If Mr. Aguilar really has a warrant, I demand to see it. Come inside, and let's go at the thing reasonably. I sha'n't refuse to accompany you to police headquarters if you insist; naturally, I'm not fool enough to resist, since I can clear away all accusations in no time—"

He spoke rapidly, genially, giving no one any chance to object. As he spoke, he put out his one hand and shoved the door open. It all happened rapidly after I had cried out my protest, too swiftly for other action. And as he pushed open the door, he found a switch inside and clicked it.

The light here was extinguished; we were plunged into pitch darkness.

Noise—alarmed voices burst forth everywhere. I pulled Virginia to one side and held her close. Men came rushing upon the porch from every side. Aguilar, I think, reached the switch and the light returned, to show Myedin gone—the house, of course. A pistol exploded somewhere inside, and at this everyone was shouting in. I abandoned Virginia and pushed in with the others, furious and aghast at the happening.

Tumult, darkness, men stumbling into one another, flashlights stabbing long rays of light across the rooms, everything in confusion—and then, so suddenly that it frightened us all, a burst of red flame erupting in our faces. How or why, we knew not. Half a dozen shots roared out; then we were frantically shoving back, away from the fierce redness—for the rooms ahead of us were alight in an instant, as though the house had leaped all at once into flames.

So it had, too, doubtless made ready beforehand. For as we retreated, the fire came gushing after us in a most

incredible and appalling manner. We tumbled outside—two men shot and nearly helpless, another dead and dragged forth limply. Everyone was shouting; an access of fear and horror had seized all except Aguilar, who continued shouting frantic orders. He made himself heard; the men scattered.

I REACHED Virginia, caught her hand, and we got away from the searing heat into a corner of the grounds. The house was now a pillar of spouting flame and thick oily smoke; everything was bright as day. The hurt men were brought to me—one dead, two with bullet-wounds, a couple more badly burned. Virginia and I, the only persons halfway calm, took charge and did what we could. The old Hindu servant of Lajpat Rai had apparently not been got clear.

"I think we got Myedin." Aguilar joined us, shouting above the crackling roar of flame. "Two men are positive they dropped him; they say he's still in there."

"We'd better scam before we roast to death," I responded.

This made sense. We got past a fence and into the next backyard with our wounded. The houses adjoining were already in wild commotion, with people running about like mad.

In time—it seemed a century—police and firemen arrived; by then, the house was a fiery mass past any saving. Virginia and I were taken back to the hotel in a radio car; to re-enter that peaceful, serene atmosphere seemed like a dream. I was astonished to find my clothes dotted with burns. In the wild excitement I had been unaware of damage.

An hour later Aguilar arrived. He came direct to my room and nodded as he saw my ruined garments spread out. His own were almost as bad.

"Chemicals," he said. "The damned place was a volcano, Clements!"

I poured him a drink, and he gulped it.

"Well?" I demanded. "Did you make certain about—him?"

He looked at me. "Eh? Him? Two of my men swore they got him. If so, his body is there still. He didn't get away through the cordon; they're all sure of that. We'll know later on, when the ashes can be searched. If they find no trace of him—"

They found none, though they located the old Hindu servant. This proved nothing. Three days later Virginia and I were married and left San Francisco. The authorities were quite satisfied that the Rajah from Hell was dead.

But as for me—well, two men left that house in the Buick sedan. "We saw one return. Did the other come by some unguessed route? Well, it's none of my business. I have my own life to live."

Who's Who in this Issue



*Richard E.
Glendinning*

ONE of a generation which has not yet had time to take its shoes off, I was born in a war twenty-nine years ago, was weaned on the Twenties, grew up in the depression, and matured in a second war.

After I was graduated from Dartmouth in 1940, where I was Editorial Chairman of the undergraduate paper, I did a stint with *Vogue*, went to another magazine as Associate Editor, then ventured to Baltimore to beat drums for the art museum. One moonless night I came upon two workmen converting a mummy's sarcophagus to my dimensions.

My fiancée would not marry me under such conditions. I left.

Intending to write while in the Navy, I lugged a portable around. It did nothing but collect salt deposits. After the war, I sold the salt, bought a desk typewriter, and set to work on a schedule almost as rigid as Elizabeth Ann's—the new baby at our house. Of late, I have been working on a novel. When the characters began to talk back, I found them in a corner for a time and wrote: "In a Pig's Whistle." (See page 75)

Lawton Ford

AS soon as I realized I had been born in New York City (Oct. 28, 1901), I went to Chicago. In after years when a return was threatening I managed to attach myself to Cleveland, Toledo, various other places, but once coming as close as New Jersey.

Educated in Egypt after World War I, which I entered when I was fifteen, and in private schools in this country before that.

Was in the British Army during the last year of that war, and for four years after, trying to see the world.

My occupations have been: Trade paper editor, copy-writer, book and drama critic, salesman, perfume-factory manager, restaurant-manager, bill-collector, mechanic, safety engineer, radio actor.

I am again in New York City, although not now at a desk. I watch little wheels go 'round in a food factory. I observe eccentric cams, rotating tables, conveyor belts and bucket elevators. I study spaghetti presses and noodle folders. Then I flatten myself against a subway door, snarling back at my fellow-riders. Then when I am home with my wife and daughter, in peace and harmony, I have no more sense than to try to write. Hah!



Glenn R. Vernam

I WAS born in Kansas, weaned in western Nebraska and turned out on the range over in the Rockies. Time and a pair of itchy feet contrived to lead me over most of the West and into a varied assortment of jobs, mostly having to do with horses, cows, pack-mules, nature and life in the tall uncut. Then there were a lot of unfamiliar trails to follow over the next hill, a myriad out-of-the-way corners to investigate, and a whole flock of unbelievable sunsets that demanded attention while they turned a picture-book world into technicolor productions. Fortunately, I was privileged to know the old pre-Hollywood West and a good many of its inimitable inhabitants before they succumbed to gasoline fumes and tourist accommodations. All this added up to a sizable backlog of story material when I succumbed to the lure of editorial checks.

This last phase of my wandering in where angels fear to tread has led over varied trails; some good, some bad, but all wonderfully rich in interest. And topping a high rocky ridge to find the warm glow of BLUE BOOK approbation lighting up the country beyond, is an experience that is well worth a lot of hard miles and a lot of dry camps.

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